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EDITORIAL

A RED BY ANOTHER NAME

"Marxist" has become Americans' epithet of choice in the second cold war. With or without its companion "Leninist," standing alone or with its modifier "Third World," it evokes fear and loathing and justifies behavior that would otherwise be tasteless, immoral or unconstitutional. Marxist professors may be denied tenure; Marxist Sandinistas may be subverted; Marxist writers may be censored.

Like "anarchist" during the great wave of reaction after World War I, and "communist" during Cold War I, "Marxist" may mean as much or as little as the user likes. It is not supposed to be descriptive—much less analytical—just discriminatory, like a racial or sexual slur or an ethnic joke.

Take the case of former Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley, exiled to the opposition while his successor, Edward Seaga, tried a tropical version of Reaganomics to cure the ills of island underdevelopment. It has not worked. The free market he vainly hoped would lure American investment only exacerbated class and economic inequality. A desperate attempt to impose austerity by raising gasoline prices provoked violence in the slums of West Kingston.

So who's to blame? According to an editorialist in New York's *Daily News*, it is the "Marxist" Manley who made the mess Seaga has been "attempting to deal with during his regime." Although it is ridiculous to blame Manley for the policies of his successor, the epithet makes an otherwise unsupportable charge credible—at least in the current ideological context. No matter that he is the very model of a non-Marxist Social Democrat, the kind of liberal reformer Marxists reject. As for Seaga, he bears no adjectival taint: not Reaganite nor capitalist nor conservative. He's just a Prime Minister, and there's nothing wrong with that.

CIVIL WRONGS COMMISSION
Mary Frances Berry

MINERS' STRIKE
Jane Dibblin

COMPUTER WARS
Paul N. Edwards

WATERGATE
Aaron Latham

THE STING OF THE LASCH
Thomas DePietro

U2 SOARS
Frank Rose

CAN ALFONSÍN SURVIVE?

THE THREATS TO ARGENTINE DEMOCRACY

PENNY LERNOUX

When Raúl Alfonsín took office as President of Argentina a year ago, many feared that his term would be a mere interlude between coups of generals and demagogues. Yet here he is heading into his second year with his popularity—and Argentina's credit—intact.

. . .

All this can quickly sour in a country whose workers too often demanded a free lunch and whose affluent citizens have looked to the armed forces to protect their privileges. But one year on, Argentina seems still excited by its regained freedoms and by Mr. Alfonsín. That isn't everything, but it's a lot.

—The New York Times, *January 14*

Buenos Aires

During Argentina's eight-year military dictatorship the industrial city of Quilmes, near Buenos Aires, was known as the "capital of repression," so harsh was the brutality against workers there. But after the ruling junta was replaced by a centrist government, in late 1983, the people of Quilmes shared the conviction of newly elected President Raúl Alfonsín that the nightmare was over.

Few believe that today. The repression continues, although it is more selective than in the days of the "dirty war," with its mass arrests and disappearances. Most of the victims are people engaged in organizing unions, student councils or church groups, which aim to educate their members about civil rights. Last year, for example, two women catechists who were working with slum dwellers in Quilmes were kidnapped

(*Continued on Page 112*)

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LETTERS.

CONGRESSMAN ON CALL

Washington

It was extremely interesting to read, in Christopher Hitchens's column in *The Nation*, about my position on the appointment of Edwin Meese 3d as Attorney General, especially since Hitchens never bothered to ask *me* what that position was ["Minority Report," Dec. 29–Jan. 5].

When Meese's nomination came before the Judiciary Committee in the last Congress, I thought my questions to the nominee were very helpful in building a thorough and penetrating record, and I will certainly do no less in this Congress.

A strong and free press has been one of my major concerns, and part of a Congressman's duty is to be accessible. Speaking for nearly all of my colleagues in both houses, I suggest to journalists that if you want to know how we feel about an issue, we are always available. Please at least try to ask.

Senator Patrick Leahy

HITCHENS REPLIES

Washington

I faithfully reported the comments of Senator Leahy's Judiciary Committee staff. I have since spoken to the Senator, who tells me frankly that he has many "difficulties" with the nomination of Meese and plans to raise questions about Meese's "forthrightness."

Surely we now know enough about Meese to decide the question of his fitness to be Attorney General. New confirmation hearings were set to begin January 29.

Christopher Hitchens

SKEPTICAL OF THE SKEPTICS

Albany

I was somewhat disappointed by Robert Lekachman's mostly negative assessment of the Treasury Department's tax simplification plan ["Inequity Forever," Dec. 15].

I don't see the basis for his contention that "the Treasury scheme freezes the 1981 distribution of tax burdens among rich, middle-class and blue-collar taxpayers." On the contrary, I expect that the overall impact of the Treasury plan, if enacted, would make the tax code fairer and more progressive. For instance, the downward slide in upper-bracket rates, which Lekachman bemoans, is offset by eliminating many existing loopholes that favor wealthy taxpayers. Since the rich generally avoid paying those high upper-bracket rates, the issue is whether they would effectively pay higher rates under the Treasury plan. I think many would.

Certainly the poor would benefit from the proposed increase in the standard deduction and from the zero bracket for low-income earners.

Generous employer contributions to workers' health plans are income and should be taxed after allowing for a reasonable nontaxable portion of the employer's contribution. The Treasury plan provides for that. Economists argue that not taxing some portion of employer contributions causes runaway health costs subsidized by Federal taxpayers.

It would have been better if, for the sake of political expediency, the Treasury had not called for the elimination of state and local tax deductions. However, I am not as convinced of the negative distributional consequences of excluding deductions as Lekachman and New York State's leading politicians seem to be.

The left should not join the vested interest groups who attack the Treasury plan. Rather we should use the positive features of the plan as a standard to criticize the less positive schemes that will emerge from the White House and Congress in coming months.

Gene Damm

LEKACHMAN REPLIES

New York City

It is possible but by no means certain that the rich will pay more, but there is no doubt at all that the impact on social, health and educational services in New York and other high-tax states will be negative. Relatively generous medical plans in union contracts represent negotiated trade-offs between wage and benefit increases. For the first time, the Treasury would tax all unemployment compensation, disability payments and black-lung benefits. It would give larger child-care tax benefits to high-income families than to moderate- and low-income families.

Although there are good things in the Treasury scheme, notably heavier taxation of corporate income, it is, taken as a whole, far from this liberal's dream. *Robert Lekachman*

A.C.L.U.'S POSITION

Auburn, Me.

Responding to Harrison E. Salisbury's December 1 article, "The Strange Correspondence of Morris Ernst and John Edgar Hoover, 1939–1964," William A. Donohue wrote, "The board of directors of the A.C.L.U. knew of and approved of the proceedings of Ernst and others" ["Letters," Dec. 29–Jan. 5]. This is false.

When the American Civil Liberties Union obtained 10,000 F.B.I. documents under the Freedom of Information Act in 1977, it immediately condemned the "inexcusable" conduct of certain A.C.L.U. leaders who collaborated from 1953 to 1959 in F.B.I. scrutiny of the organization and some of its members. In addition, the national president, Norman Dorsen, promptly appointed a commission to study the voluminous files in detail and to report its findings to the board of directors. I served as chairman of that commission.

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After a full canvass of the
mission concluded, and th
board agreed, that the conduct engage
Ernst and a few others was wrong and could not be condoned whatever the historical circumstances under which it occurred. That remains the position of the A.C.L.U.

Shepard Lee
A.C.L.U. Board Member

UNESCO ATTACK

Charleston, W. Va.

Elsa Dixler's article about the Heritage Foundation's attack on Unesco and its unfairness would have carried more weight if she had detailed wherein the Heritage Foundation was incorrect ["Another Opening, Another Showcase for the Right," Dec. 22].

One doesn't have to be a card-carrying Adam Smith laissez-faire imperialist to believe that Unesco's director general has become a dictator and, additionally, is head mother of a bureaucracy that makes the Pentagon appear sparse by comparison.

Unesco's purposes are worthy. Perhaps our pulling out will convince the organization to return to carrying out its initial purposes and thereby prompt us to rejoin.

W.E. Chilton 3d

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

New York City

Alexander Cockburn was kind enough to mention my reporting of recent experiments concerning the response of embryos on being read to aloud ["Letters," Dec. 29–Jan. 5]. A just-reported case reveals that an embryo only hours old wiggled with unmistakable glee on being read several paragraphs from the most recent "Beat the Devil." It happened on Christmas Eve, and there was hushed talk of portents. *Nat Hentoff*

AUTHOR'S QUERY

Amsterdam

For a biographical study of Vito Marcantonio (campaign manager for Mayor Fiorello La Guardia; Assistant U.S. District Attorney, 1930-31; U.S. Representative, 1935-37 and 1939-51), I would appreciate receiving material about his life, work and beliefs. I am also interested in his work for the Harlem Tenants' League and his role in the 1920 tenants' strike. *Marc van Gemert*
Gibraltarstraat 35-II
1055 NJ Amsterdam
The Netherlands

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EDITORIALS.

Contempt of Court

Last week the defendant in *Nicaragua v. United States* walked out of court. By withdrawing from the World Court's jurisdiction, the Reagan Administration sent out a signal of contempt for international law and multilateral diplomacy.

In November, when the Court voted 15 to 1 to hear Nicaragua's case alleging that the United States is waging an illegal war against it, the Administration reacted angrily. Now the State Department attempts to justify its walkout by defaming the Court's good name and standing, calling the decision "a departure from its tradition of judicial restraint and a risky venture into treacherous political waters." This is the same World Court to which the United States ran in 1980 with claims against Iran. Then, the Administration accepted the Court's unanimous ruling that the taking of hostages was illegal. It doesn't require an expert in international law to spot the hypocrisy in this Administration's argument that the Nicaraguans' complaints raise political, not legal, questions. Most questions in international law are by definition political.

Phrases like "politicized," reminiscent of those invoked

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to justify withdrawing from Unesco, have reappeared in the Administration's case against the World Court. A pullout from the Court may not proceed so smoothly, however. Unesco had many detractors, but both liberals and conservatives—some of them converts to international law who never challenged the legal basis of our involvement in Vietnam—are firmly committed to U.S. participation in the Court. Richard Gardner, Ambassador to Italy during the Carter Administration, calls the decision "foolish, self-damaging and profoundly un-American." The prestigious American Society of International Law has scheduled an emergency meeting with State Department officials to register its protest.

What of the Court's future? Several State Department voices have urged complete withdrawal. More likely, the Administration will proceed with plans, reportedly under consideration since last year, to revise the terms of our participation in the Court. Fears that Afghanistan may soon charge us with funneling aid and weapons to Moslem rebels must contribute to the desire to clarify "our . . . acceptance of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction."

These are heady times for our re-elected President. Perhaps he and his courtiers have persuaded themselves that he is the incarnation of the national will. But can he really believe "*Le monde, c'est moi*"?

Right's Reaction

The overwhelming defeat of gay antidiscrimination measures in a citywide referendum in Houston illustrates the drawbacks of using direct democracy to resolve social conflicts when privilege and power are at stake. Houston's gay community has had some recent success as a voting bloc for liberal candidates, but it remains an unpopular minority, with few allies and no social legitimacy. Against it were arrayed the rich and powerful of the Texas boomtown: the banks, the Chamber of Commerce, the Republican Party and the fundamentalist churches, which use homosexual and women's rights as a focus for their campaigns against earthly evil. Almost 30 percent of the electorate came out to vote in the January 19 referendum—an extremely high percentage, as local initiatives go in Houston—and the majority worked its will by a margin of 4 to 1. "We think we were lucky we weren't run out of town," a lesbian activist said after the enormity of the loss became clear. She might have added, "yet."

The events that led to the vote began last June, when black City Councilman Anthony Hall introduced an amendment to an antidiscrimination ordinance, adding "sexual orientation" to the list of proscribed reasons for denying city jobs. That measure and a similar amendment to the affirmative action section of the ordinance were narrowly passed. Significantly, all four black Council members voted for the amendments protecting gays. Mayor Kathy Whitmire, whose election victory in 1981 had been credited to energetic black and gay support, also backed the amendments.

The reaction set in immediately. A conservative councilman and the head of the local Republican Party began plotting repeal by referendum. The chair of a big bank kicked off the campaign with a $50,000 donation. Religious leaders—Jews and Catholics as well as Protestant fundamentalists—joined an antigay axis that included the Ku Klux Klan and black Baptist ministers.

The "antis" put out gruesome literature showing a homosexual about to murder a child with an ax, and they accused gay men and lesbians of kidnapping, molesting and killing children. The Chamber of Commerce said gay rights was bad for business. Mayor Whitmire continued to support the ordinance but without the sense of urgency and fervor that might have organized wider liberal support for the referendum. After the vote, she said her administration would not discriminate against gays in municipal employment; presumably, future mayors might bash as they please.

Gays are taking a beating in several sections of the country. New York City's Archbishop John J. O'Connor, the Savanarola of St. Patrick's, refuses to abide by a local rule against discrimination when filling jobs at municipally funded Catholic educational and welfare agencies. Mayor Edward Koch, who has enjoyed gay support in both his mayoral elections, has failed four times to use his vaunted political power to get a gay antidiscrimination ordinance through the City Council. At the national level, the Supreme Court has just heard arguments in a case from Oklahoma, where gays are barred by law from "advocating" their sexual preference in public schools. A U.S. Court of Appeals declared that law unconstitutional. There's no way of knowing what will happen, but the Supreme Court could devastate free speech and sexual freedom in a single blow by reversing that decision.

There's also a bright spot. Residents in West Hollywood, California, which until November 6 was an unincorporated neighborhood of Los Angeles County, voted to become a city. Although homosexuals are densely settled in West Hollywood, they were significantly helped in the November election by a liberal and left coalition that was concerned with issues besides sexual politics. Their victory points up the necessity of developing strategies for power, rather than simply making appeals to compassion, where the rights of minorities are in contention. The City Council that was elected when the incorporation referendum passed has a lesbian and gay majority and a commanding progressive presence. Of course, sexual activists aren't automatically liberal on other issues, and vice versa. The coalition in West Hollywood brought both forces to power, and it also keeps them honest on each other's priorities.

Among its first acts, the City Council passed an antidiscrimination ordinance as well as moratoriums on rent increases and condominium development. Soon afterward, Barney's Beanery, a macho chili parlor on Sunset Strip and a progenitor of the jalapeño-margarita craze sweeping young urban culture, was forced to abide by the ordinance and take down from behind its bar a wooden paddle that had hung there for a half-century, emblazoned with the words: "We Don't Serve Faggots." So much

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for machismo when it loses its majority status.

Elsewhere, gays, feminists, blacks and Hispanics will have to work hard during the next four years to build political coalitions that can withstand the battering blows from the New Right and its partners in social aggression. As Rosalind Petchesky points out in the following editorial, the reaction against recent modest gains by women and minority groups operates through grass-roots movements. With help from President Reagan and his kind, such movements can win votes and influence people in state legislatures and local councils. But there is a potential force of equal or superior strength in opposition, and it must be organized to bid for the power it deserves.

Bombing Feminism

The twelfth anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court's historic decision on abortion, arrived to the sound of exploding dynamite. Thirty bombings in two and a half years and countless other acts of vandalism and harassment have threatened many clinics' ability to provide services and have shaken many young women's nerve in seeking them. These attacks are a serious escalation in the antiabortion war.

The bombs have also exploded the public discourse on abortion, shifting its center of gravity to the right. The "armies of God" have achieved what President Reagan, Archbishop John J. O'Connor and Senator Jesse Helms together could not. They—and the media that quote them at length—have defined the abortion debate as one between the holy warriors and the "moderates" who seek legal means to restrain women's reproductive freedom.

Most stories about the abortion terrorists don't even ask why the debate has escalated to warfare. The answer lies not in born-again fanaticism or in compassion for the unborn but in sexual politics. Feminists have long recognized that preserving the fetus is not the right-to-lifers' chief concern; if it were, they would call for increased funding for prenatal and infant care. Recently journalists seem to have found another explanation: the abortion debate pits traditional housewives with several children against professional women with few or none.

That theory, which *Newsweek*'s January 14 cover story propounds, omits the principal protagonists of abortion politics: the young (16 to 25), single, largely nonaffluent women who have abortions; and the older white conservative men who lead and finance the fight against them. It ignores the dimension of power in the struggle, and it does not explain why abortion clinics are being bombed and who is bombing them.

Changing sexual patterns among young unmarried women during the last fifteen years result from a variety of broad social trends, including late marriages, high rates of college attendance and employment, and the impact of feminism. But abortion and birth control have made that changed sexuality visible—and apparently independent of marriage, paternal authority, even men. In that respect, the clinic—the main provider of abortion services in this country—threatens patriarchal control over women's sexuality. That is why the men of the right make it a target.

Indeed the abortion debate is less about motherhood than about manhood. Consider Matthew J. Goldsby, 21-year-old white construction worker and proud bomber of four clinics in Pensacola, Florida. *The Village Voice*'s characterization of Goldsby and his cohorts as "naïve, distraught individuals who are deeply religious" leaves out the cultural and political context in which those young men came of age. Their "mounting anger and frustration" was nurtured over a decade by rantings against feminism, abortion, homosexuality and communism, first from radio and television evangelists and then from the politicians of the New Right. If Goldsby had been born twenty years earlier, he would probably have joined the Ku Klux Klan with John Burt, Pensacola's senior antiabortion activist, to save the white race from Martin Luther King Jr. Today, Goldsby's vision of manhood involves rescuing fetuses from murderous women.

But Matt Goldsby is only the shadow of the big men who are his leaders: the Joe Scheidlers, John Burts and others in the antiabortion crusade who advocate direct action and cheer his "heroism"; the fundamentalist preachers in his community and around the country; the Catholic bishops who threaten to expel nuns who support a woman's right to choose; the director of the F.B.I., who says the bombings are not "true terrorism" because they don't attack the government; and Ronald Reagan, who refuses to order a national investigation and who on the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* assured a right-to-life rally of his "great solidarity" with people who call abortion baby killing.

The assertion of manhood through verbal or physical attacks on abortion betrays desperation. After all, the courts continue to uphold abortion; and Congress, to leave it alone. More than a million women a year persist in having abortions. And popular opinion remains ambiguous on questions of abortion morality. When asked whether they would "approve of" abortion "for any reason," as many as 60 percent of adults surveyed have said no. When asked, however, whether "a woman should have the right to decide whether she has an abortion," more than 80 percent have said yes. A police sergeant who supervised the evacuation of a New York City clinic after a bomb threat epitomized that ambiguity when he told a reporter: "To see what goes on here bothers me. But at the same time, it's their bodies, their decision."

The hold of this practical view of abortion on American politics has driven the opposition to violence. Although dangerous, the clinic bombings can also be understood as a reaction to the continued presence of democratic and feminist values in everyday morality.

ROSALIND PETCHESKY

Rosalind Petchesky, the author of Abortion and Woman's Choice *(Northeastern University Press) is associate professor of political theory at Ramapo College in New Jersey.*

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Here I sit on Inauguration Day, my ball ticket for this evening looking at me reproachfully from the mantelpiece and my tuxedo gleaming on its hanger. The opening of Ronald Reagan's second term provides the ideal occasion to discuss where we are, where we have come from and where we are going. The changes in White House and Cabinet personnel, the looming deficit, the sorry charade impending at Geneva, the mounting aggression in Central America—all these provide ideal themes for the columnist. So I thought I would consider animal rights.

From 1916 to 1917, Rosa Luxembourg was imprisoned by the Imperial German authorities at the fortress of Wronke in what is now Poznań, Poland. From there, she kept up an active correspondence with her friend and comrade Sonia Liebknecht. On one occasion she wrote as follows:

> Sonichka, dear, I had such a pang recently. In the courtyard where I walk army lorries often arrive, laden with haversacks or old tunics and shirts from the front; sometimes they're stained with blood. They are sent to the women's cells to be mended, and then go back to the army for use. The other day one of these lorries was drawn by a team of buffaloes instead of horses. I had never seen the creatures close at hand before. They are much more powerfully built than our oxen, with flattened heads, and horns strongly curved back so that their skulls are shaped something like a sheep's skull. They are black and have huge, soft eyes. The buffaloes are war booty from Rumania. The soldier drivers said that it was very difficult to catch these animals who had always run wild, and still more difficult to break them into harness. They had been unmercifully flogged—on the principle of *vae victis*. . . . The other day a lorry came laden with sacks, so overladen indeed that the buffaloes were unable to drag it across the threshold of the gates. The soldier driver, a brute of a fellow, belabored the poor beasts so savagely with the butt end of his whip that the wardress at the gate, indignant at the sight, asked him if he had no compassion for animals. "No more than anyone has compassion for us men," he answered with an evil smile, and redoubled his blows. At length the buffaloes succeeded in drawing the load over the obstacle, but one of them was bleeding. You know their hide is proverbial for its thickness and toughness, but it had been torn.

While this was happening in some dank, obscure prison yard, the whole of Europe had been turned into a killing field. Poison gas, human-wave assaults, the use of starvation as a weapon against civilians, aerial bombardment of undefended towns—almost every one of our contemporary horrors was being rehearsed and refined. Rosa Luxembourg had been among the first to see it coming, and she was certainly the first to call for opposition to it, which was why she was—not for the first time—in prison. Her speeches and pamphlets were almost physical in their effect. Her incisive and analytic message was matched, but never obscured or diluted, by her humanistic outrage. Her party—the pride of European socialism and democracy—had been gelded after defiling itself with "patriotic" compromises. Her friends were dead or in jail. The newspapers had no more room for the casualty lists on the western or eastern fronts. Yet she could still spare some emotional energy for a team of wretched Rumanian buffaloes.

I have always thought that this example supplied the answer to a certain kind of sneer. Those who worry about the treatment of animals are often accused of sentimentality or of putting the plight of beasts before the immense problems of humanity. But it is quite rare to find a humanitarian who is indifferent to animals and suprisingly common to find that those who belittle animal rights are the same ones who find the pain of humans easy to bear. Both rules are qualified by the very lonely or, in some famous cases, the extremely inhumane—those who weep over their war horses or hunting dogs while ignoring decimated armies and smoldering villages.

The study of biology confirms what some of our better instincts tell us. Our own fate is closely bound up with that of other species, and the loss of them would mean more than the loss of our pleasure in their company. Knowledge, science, medicine and nutrition are all enhanced for humans by other creatures.

Of course, it is precisely in the name of knowledge, science, medicine and nutrition that the worst things done to animals are justified. Cats are subjected to pain by functionaries in white coats, in order to see how much pain they can endure. Dogs are given overdoses of alcohol and nicotine to find if the effects are harmful. Acids are tested on the eyes of live rabbits by the researchers of cosmetic companies. You don't have to be William Blake to find this intolerable, just as you don't have to be a vegetarian to object to the torture of veal calves and other animals for luxury foods. The problem here is not an esthetic one. It concerns the sense in which it is not absurd to speak of the treatment of animals as inhumane.

Those who campaign for "animal liberation" have confused the issue unnecessarily by borrowing human terminology. While the proletarian condition can be abolished and women can cease to be chattels and whole races can throw off slavery, there is no means of freeing animals from the condition of being beasts. For all I know, that is just as well. The absolutists don't know better, any more than did the foolish clergy who used to debate, and perhaps still do, whether animals have souls. The argument against inhumane conduct is that it degrades the perpetrator as well as the victim, and you don't have to be an anthropomorphist to see that some of our behavior toward animals falls into that category. It is not in our interest, for example, to pump factory-farm creatures full of antibiotics to keep them "healthy" in what would otherwise be pestiferous conditions. The geniuses who originated that form of profiteering are risking all manner of plagues among us, too. When Rosa Luxembourg referred to "exploitation," as she did later on in that letter, she meant the analogy to stick. I must now don my tuxedo and head to the ball, where Republican womanhood is gathering en masse. I know before I get there that the well-upholstered shoulders will be garnished with a pointless riot of endangered fur.

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CALVIN TRILLIN

I began my study of Manhattan crosstown bus-boarding customs with confidence that it would put to rest once and for all the question of whether I am a serious researcher or simply a crank. From the moment I observed a line of people waiting at the crosstown bus stop on East 79th and York early one Wednesday morning, I realized that I was on to something big. I was certain that there were no reports of Manhattan bus lines in the literature; I keep up with the journals. Orderly lines of any sort are so rare in New York that I can recall only one scholarly article on the subject in the past decade—a study of what sandwich makers at Katz's Delicatessen, on the Lower East Side, say to customers who push ahead (see "'Whadaya, Lady, A Movie Star?': A Study of Anglo-Yiddish Pejorative Vernacular," *Journal of Linear Studies*, June 1979). My own fieldwork has been done mainly in Europe, where I spent several years studying degrees of ovalness in Italian lines; I later published the seminal study establishing that French lines are triangular in shape, with the base of the triangle at the place where business is being conducted (see "Point Man to the Rear: Cartesian Triangularity in Modern France," *The Queue Review*, Spring 1968).

I don't know how the crank talk got started, but I suspect it had something to do with the incident in London. Ironically, this was during a period of remarkable productivity for me—when I made the breakthrough discovery that a lot of English people queue for fun. I can still remember the moment I realized what I was on to: it was a bright spring evening, and the family I was observing, the Tootingbecs, had been in four sweets queues without having bought a thing.

"Lovely, isn't it," Maurice Tootingbec said to his children as they all dropped out of the fourth sweets queue just before reaching the counter. "Let's go queue for the Number 31 bus for a while and then walk home."

There was no reason for me to be surprised, then, when I turned into a doorway on New Bond Street to light a cigarette and a queue of thirty-five English people formed behind me. Yes, I'll admit that I found it a bit irritating when they continued to follow me down the street; we all know how important it is for the observer to remain detached from what he is observing. "I was just lighting a cigarette," I finally said to the man behind me.

"Thanks awfully, but I gave it up," he said. "But thanks very much indeed."

Yes, after twenty minutes of this, I might have raised my voice. Yes, one of the things I said might have been, "I won't be followed by overpolite foreigners!" Yes, I did dash across Oxford Street just as the light was turning red. But if that was a move dictated by temper rather than by scientific inquiry, as those who spread the crank talk would have us believe, how does one explain the scholarly article it produced—"How Stiff the Upper Lip: British Queue Discipline Under Stress in the West End of London" (*Lineup: A Canadian Journal of Waiting*, Fall 1962)?

I knew I had to be thorough—that is, I had to observe crosstown bus-boarding customs on the West Side as well as on the East Side. I went to 79th and Broadway and found my thoroughness rewarded. The people waiting for the crosstown bus were not in line. In fact, when the doors of the bus opened, the crowd trying to climb aboard was so unruly that I was knocked to the pavement by a man who had lunged suddenly to crowd in front of a pregnant woman. Fieldwork is not without risks. How well we all remember Ralph W. Bermondsey, the lottery-line specialist who became preoccupied while observing a queue in Punta del Este in 1948 and discovered too late that he had enlisted in the Uruguayan merchant marine.

Lines on the East Side but no lines on the West Side! For a serious researcher, that raised intriguing questions. Was there a correlation between the number of stockbrokers living on the East Side and the presence of lines? If so, why is the floor of the Stock Exchange so much like a West Side bus stop? Had a lot more people on the East Side been to England? Had a lot more people on the West Side been to Italy? (See "'Marone!'—Patterns of Injuries Among Neopolitans Attempting to Board Rush Hour Buses," *Journal of Orderly Procession*, February 1974.) The risk of being trampled on the West Side would not be the only difficulty in gathering data. From preliminary observations, I realized that an interviewer would have trouble getting the East Side line-standers to turn their attention from a close perusal of *The Wall Street Journal*.

And would I find it just a bit irritating that in New York, the home of the push and the shove, people were lining up for buses? Was it troubling that most of those so lined looked like those maddeningly organized 26-year-old M.B.A.s who make $52,000 a year and jog every morning from 6 to 6:45 and switch their money from copra futures to limited partnership real estate deals while I'm watching *Mary Tyler Moore Show* reruns?

"I'm a researcher, not a crank," I said as I approached an East Side line of forty or so carefully turned-out young professionals. I realized that I had spoken aloud, but nobody looked up from *The Wall Street Journal*. I happened to glance across 79th Street: there was the crosstown bus line. Then what line was this? Just then, a taxi stopped, the first person in line climbed in, and everyone else took one step foward. A taxi line! In a town where battling for a taxi has been raised to the level of a revered martial art, these people were standing in a taxi line, like a bunch of overpolite foreigners. Yes, I might have raised my voice. Yes, one of the things I said might have been, "You're ruining this city, you repressed little creeps!" What my detractors don't understand, though, is that this was all for research. I'm working on the article now—"Yuppies Provoked: Attempts to Distract From *The Wall Street Journal* the Sort of People Who Would Form a Taxi Line in Manhattan." It will be in the Spring issue of *Crank Quarterly*.

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DISPATCHES.

■ ARCHIVES: Tying Up History

When Americans see their President struck by the urge for an imperial adventure, they might find that a strong dose of unexpurgated history is an effective antidote. Public knowledge of past failures may not deter him, but at least it will encourage second thoughts. Little wonder that this prescription has been challenged in the Reagan era. The Administration has used several strategies to hinder the writing of postwar history. The budget of the National Archives was slashed in 1982, and though its allocations have begun to increase, the systematic declassification of records more than thirty years old has all but ended. Previously released documents have been reclassified, and the underfunded bureaus handling Freedom of Information Act requests prefer to wage wars of attrition on scholars rather than search files.

The effort to slow the pace of historical research has spread to archives outside Washington: for example, to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston. Soon after Alexander Butterfield revealed the existence of the Nixon tapes in 1973, the Kennedy archives disclosed its own little secret: unbeknown to his advisers, Kennedy had also bugged the Oval Office.

The library staff spent years cataloguing the tapes, no small task. The problem now is making transcripts accessible, particularly the 183.5 hours classified as national security information. The library says it takes 150 hours of the staff's time to produce a verbatim transcript of a one-hour conversation; the transcript then must be reviewed by the National Security Council, which decides what portions of it can be declassified. The library has allocated 500 hours of staff time annually to this task, an average of ten hours a week. According to simple calculation, some 28,000 hours are needed just to transcribe the tapes containing national security information. That means that with the staff working at the current rate of 500 hours per year, the last tapes will be made public in 2040, give or take a few years.

In a move that will cause further delays, the archives recently suspended the mandatory review provision under which researchers received a relatively prompt decision from the N.S.C. on whether a restricted recording would be declassified. Thus the library becomes the sole arbiter of the timetable for releasing the tapes, rather than being guided, as specified under the law, by the weight of public interest.

Officials at the Kennedy library point out that since 1979 the staff has declined from twenty-three to thirteen. While we sympathize with the library's predicament, we note that last fall Congress appropriated $5.2 million to the Kennedy library to improve its facilities. One of the more pressing needs, apparently, is for a new boat dock.

■ IRAN: C.I.A. Methods—Plus ça Change. . .

The Central Intelligence Agency claims that one of the reasons it opposes the Freedom of Information Act is that declassified documents may reveal C.I.A. sources and methods, although the agency makes liberal use of its statutory prerogative to "sanitize" documents by deleting such information. But how different are current methods from those used ten or even twenty years ago?

C.I.A. documents seized by the Iranians who occupied the U.S. Embassy in 1979 suggest that the agency's methods haven't changed all that much since it was founded, after World War II. Volume 38 of the documents reprints a State Department cable reporting on the activities of a U.S. informant with the code name SDJanus/38. On September 12, 1979, SDJanus/38 reported that he had just returned from Turkey, to which he had helped the director general of SAVAK for Teheran, Gen. Ghasem Parvianfar, escape. SDJanus/38 said there were a few SAVAK officers still in hiding in Teheran, but the Kurdish "rat line" was working well.

The term "rat line" has been part of U.S. intelligence lexicon since the late 1940s, when U.S. intelligence services arranged for suspected Nazi war criminals to escape from Europe along a route operated by Catholic priests. Klaus (Butcher of Lyon) Barbie fled Germany via rat line, according to a Justice Department report published in 1983.

One might argue that General Parvianfar is a small-timer compared with Barbie, but another cable reprinted in Volume 38 suggests the two had much in common. Parvianfar was "assigned to SAVAK in 1968 as a colonel. . . . [According to a reliable source] he was an active, accurate and hard-working employee, but at the same time he was an ailing man, hot-tempered, nervous, had old-fashioned ideas and views and had limited and superficial knowledge." In April 1975, as chief of Teheran's SAVAK office, the general was "deeply involved in anti-terrorist activities"—a polite way of saying he had participated in the torture of the Shah's political opponents.

Despite all the sinister talk of rat lines and torture, the cables are not without banalities. The same cable that describes the general's narrow escape from Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's execution squads to sanctuary in Turkey contains the following request: "Could [the U.S. Embassy in] Teheran obtain name of MAAG [U.S. military] administrative officer responsible for [paying SDJanus/38] so that SDJanus/38 can advise his mother-in-law who to contact."

■ THE PHILIPPINES: 'Envelopmental Journalism'

When Mariam Soraya, a reporter for the *Metro Manila Times*, received an envelope stuffed with 1,000 pesos (about $50) from a member of parliament, she was not surprised. Such bribes are commonplace at the Manila dailies, most of which are owned by businessmen with close political ties to President Ferdinand Marcos.

But then Soraya astonished her editors and fellow journalists by announcing she would return the money. She was urged to keep it, if only because none of the other reporters had ever returned their *pourboires*. Nonetheless, Soraya and Marites D. Vitug of the respected financial publication *Business Day*, who had been bribed by the same politician, handed the money over to their editors and wrote about the

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bribery in their respective papers. The reporters identified their would-be corrupter as Jolly Benitez, a Marcos supporter who was seeking more favorable coverage.

Since so few Manila reporters earn a living wage, many have become dependent on payments by government officials, who, in turn, use their financial leverage to control the press. Indeed, bribes are replacing censorship, which has eased in the last two years. The opposition weekly *Veritas*, funded by the Catholic Church and a group of businessmen, calls the practice envelopmental journalism.

In another case, pressure has been exerted on thirteen journalists who testified before the Agrava board, which last year investigated the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. The journalists' affidavits had implicated Col. Vicente Tigas, media relations chief of the elite Presidential Security Command, in the conspiracy. He was identified as the official who barred the press from a view of the plane ramp on which Aquino was shot.

After the Agrava board issued its report recommending the indictment of twenty-six military men who it said had participated in the assassination plot, Tigas persuaded twelve of the journalists to retract their testimony against him. Only Ben Malumay of the *People's Journal* refused. "I told him I could not retract my statement before the board because I gave it under oath," Malumay said.

Jaime Cardinal Sin, the Catholic primate of Manila and a vigorous critic of the Marcos regime, immediately issued a statement charging that the reporters had changed their testimony because they had been "either paid or intimidated." The Cardinal suggested that the reporters ought to be prosecuted for perjury.

■ ISRAEL: Shin Bet Terrorism?

Two kinds of terrorism exist in the West Bank: Palestinian terrorism carried out by the P.L.O. and Israeli terrorism perpetrated by a shadowy Jewish underground determined to drive the remaining Arabs across the Jordan River. The Israeli government's Karp report describes hundreds of such anti-Arab terrorist acts.

Considerable insight into the motives of the Jewish groups can be gained from the current trial of twenty-seven Israelis arrested for various acts of terrorism, including the attempted assassination of several Palestinian mayors. One of the defense's major arguments is that the Shin Bet (the Israeli equivalent of the F.B.I.) was aware of their activities. Some defendants claim to have plea-bargained a deal with Shin Bet whereby they would not be charged with some of the more serious crimes, such as attempts to blow up several mosques, if they made full confessions.

Michael Schwartz reported recently in *Middle East International* that some defendants claim the security agency promised them that it would recommend pardons to the courts. Agency officials deny making binding deals, even though some of the promises they allegedly made to the defendants, such as allowing them to plan a joint defense, were granted. Because the Shin Bet agents involved are being questioned in camera, we may never know the truth.

Still, some of the witnesses called by the defense will find themselves in an awkward situation. Defense lawyers plan to call former Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan and Gen. Ariel Sharon to testify that the defendants were acting in the national interest. One of the defendants, Ben Shushan, apparently met frequently with Sharon and other army officials.

According to an opinion poll, more than 30 percent of the Israeli public finds "some justification" for the actions of the Jewish underground. As former head of the secret services, Isser Har'el explains: "This underground claimed to have protected us. They want to fight Arab terrorism. . . . of course there is a difference, an essential difference. The Arab terrorist wants to destroy the state and kill us as well. The Jewish underground doesn't want that."

The courts too have shown partiality to Jewish terrorists. Avino'am Katriely, convicted of providing rifle silencers to a group that attempted to blow up a mosque, was sentenced to fifteen months in prison, while a 17-year-old Palestinian who waved a Palestinian flag in public was sent up for eighteen months. No'am Yinon got eighteen months for transporting fifty land mines from the Golan Heights to the West Bank for the underground; an Arab who slapped a Jewish child was jailed for a year.

■ UNITED STATES: American Legion Snitches

"Over the past decade, there has been an increase in the hostile intelligence presence in the United States." So said Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard G. Stilwell last month in explaining why as many as 48,000 Pentagon employees will have to take a lie detector test. For the first time, Pentagon jobs may be denied to people who fail the test.

Such is the official paranoia of our times. Nowadays, officials turn to technology to root out subversives, whereas an earlier generation used human informants. The following National Security Council report, dated June 30, 1952, and declassified just two years ago, describes a spy recruitment program of the McCarthy era:

> The FBI, cognizant of the fact that American Legionnaires throughout the country are a rich source of information due to their background as well as their diversified and dispersed activities, has continued its program of regularly contacting members of the American Legion to assure the receipt of information coming to their attention which pertains to the internal security of the nation. The expanded informant program, above described, is designed to circumvent or to control and prosecute acts of sabotage, espionage, and other subversive activities. The present Informant Program was designed for periods of national emergency, such as the present, and may be expected to reach its maximum effectiveness in the event of war. In addition, however, this program serves an extremely worthwhile purpose during the period of limited mobilization.

On questions of loyalty, however, machines are sometimes as unreliable as human witnesses proved to be in the 1950s. And the political witch hunts they serve have no place in a democratic society.

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ARTICLES.

ADMINISTRATION LAP DOG

Taming the Civil Rights Commission

MARY FRANCES BERRY

About a year and a half ago, there was a brief time when it looked as if the Reagan Administration's bid to take over the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights would fail. After President Reagan fired commissioner Blandina Ramirez and me in October 1983, a Federal court ordered our reinstatement on the ground that the commission is an independent government agency and not subject to Presidential control. But one month later, after considerable maneuvering, the Administration succeeded in gaining a majority on the commission. Since then, the Reagan commissioners have followed a radically different course from that of their predecessors.

From its founding, in 1957, by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the commission had been made up of distinguished men and women who were dedicated to advancing the cause of civil rights rather than the interests of a particular politician or ideology. Most of them served for many years, under several Presidents. When they criticized government policies or agencies, no one tried to fire them. President Reagan's attack on sitting commissioners represented a break with that tradition, as did his appointment of new commissioners who share his goal of weakening existing civil rights remedies.

The major work in transforming the commission has been done by staff director Linda Chavez and chair Clarence Pendleton Jr. (who likes to insist that the President is colorblind, although the White House announcement of his appointment referred to him as the first black to head the commission). They have been assisted by John Bunzel and Morris Abram. Esther Gonzales-Arroyo Buckley and Robert Destro have been largely taken for granted by the others, who count on them to go along with whatever they propose. Francis Guess at first seemed to be an Administration rubber stamp, although he has since become increasingly assertive.

By law the commission must study and collect information, investigate allegations of discrimination and evaluate government laws and policies. Since last January it has contradicted its own procedures, issued statements before it investigates the facts, muzzled its state advisory committees to prevent them from announcing unacceptable conclusions and sidestepped experienced Civil Service staff members.

The commission has for the most part abandoned its responsibility to monitor the activities of the civil rights enforcement agencies of the Federal government. Not one report or statement about any Federal body has been issued since the takeover. Indeed, the commission has become so much a public relations operation for the Administration that its members have been referred to in the media as "Administration spokespersons." At the commission's first meeting last year, the new majority quickly issued a statement chastising the Supreme Court for upholding a lower court's decision in *Bratton v. City of Detroit*. Citing a voluminous trial record that proved the city's Police Department had been biased in its hiring and promotion policies, the lower court had ordered the department to set quotas for the promotion of qualified black and white police officers on a one-to-one basis. The commission's statement was consistent with the Administration's opposition to affirmative action quotas. (Administration officials had falsely characterized the issue of quotas as the basis of the dispute with the previous commissioners.)

When the Supreme Court held in *Firefighters Local Union No. 1784 v. Stotts* that seniority prevails over some affirmative action remedies, the commission quickly praised the decision as the death knell for group-victimization theories and affirmative action goals. Its statement, like the one on the Detroit case, was issued before the commission had investigated the factual context of the case. Contrary to the commission's characterization, however, courts of appeal have since interpreted the *Stotts* decision narrowly, leaving most affirmative action remedies in place.

Other violations of commission procedures have occurred in the service of more blatantly political aims. For example, Abram told the White House that I had suggested the commission discuss the President's reluctance to repudiate an endorsement of his re-election bid by Bill Wilkinson, Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. During a break in the next meeting, Abram produced a letter from the President repudiating the Klan but not Wilkinson. Then, without commission approval, Abram called a press conference to announce the letter. In another departure from procedure, and without the other commissioners' approval or a preliminary investigation by the staff, Pendleton asked the Democratic Presidential candidates what they thought about remarks allegedly made by Louis Farrakhan and how they thought Jesse Jackson should respond. Although I had stated publicly that Jackson should repudiate Farrakhan if the statements had been made, I argued that the commission should avoid injecting itself into a partisan political controversy before we had ascertained the facts. Pendleton and his cohorts agreed to take no further action after it seemed Guess and Destro would join Ramirez and me in formally reprimanding them for flouting the rules. But during the Presidential race, issuing pronouncements without consulting the other commissioners became a habit with Pendleton. Taking sides in an intra-Administration fight, he publicly criticized the President for supporting the practice of awarding a set percentage of Federal contracts to minority

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businesses and for convening a meeting of blacks he had appointed to government jobs.

In still another departure from policy, the majority voted to require state advisory committees (composed of citizens appointed by the commission who serve without pay to monitor civil rights problems in their states) to submit their reports to Washington for review prior to their release. The reason given was that the reports had been uneven and had ranged too far afield. Actually, the majority was unhappy with the state bodies because they had continued to work on issues of which it disapproved, such as equal opportunity budgets.

Blandina Ramirez and I find the majority's refusal to undertake the required hearings and investigations before issuing statements abhorrent, but our protests have gone unheeded. After the Supreme Court's decision in *Grove City College v. Bell*, which narrowed the scope of the language in Title IX of the Civil Rights Act prohibiting sex discrimination in education, we suggested that the commission issue a statement calling on Congress to pass a law nullifying the decision's impact. Such a statement could draw on data compiled by the commission staff in the last five years. The majority opposed such a statement. They supported new legislation but said it should include language opposing certain affirmative action remedies and adding a requirement that intent to discriminate be proved.

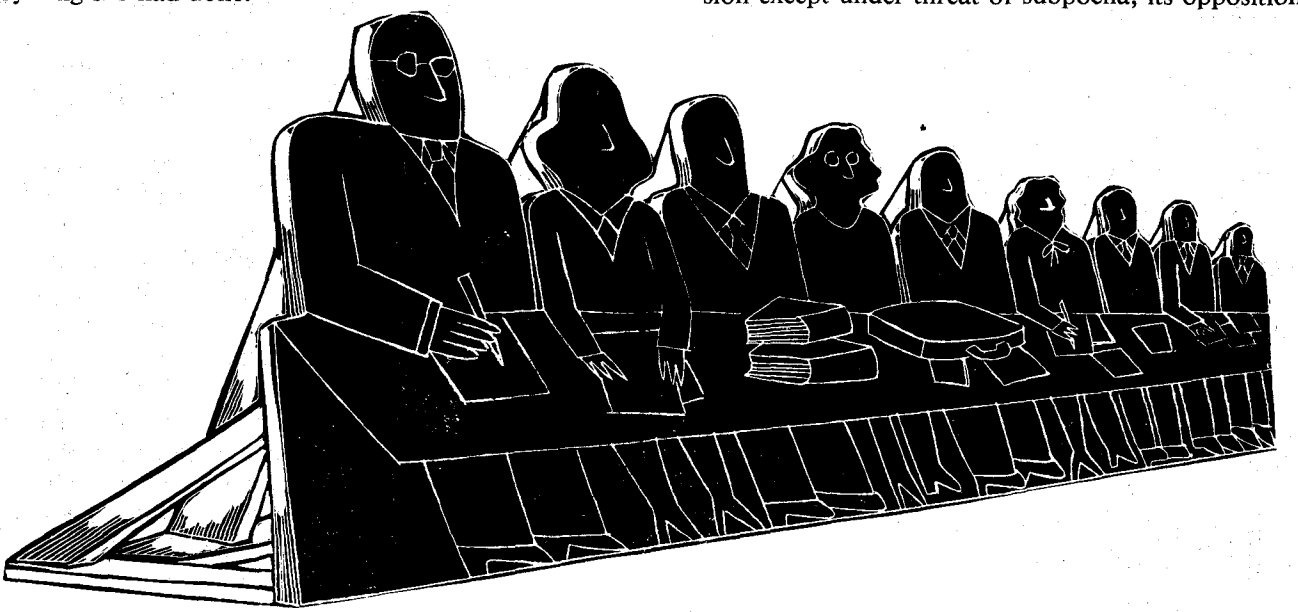
Staff director Chavez, who has no policy-making powers under the law, has also spoken out publicly on policy matters. After the House passed the Civil Rights Act of 1984, she provided a detailed analysis of the bill's shortcomings to anti-civil-rights senators and to the media. When Representative Don Edwards accused her of suggesting crippling amendments to the opposition, Chavez asserted that she had only responded to the senators' requests for technical assistance, in keeping with the commission's past procedures. When Pendleton was queried about Chavez's actions at a commission meeting, he said he approved of everything she had done.

There was more to come. Without consulting the other commissioners, Pendleton canceled our November meeting and held a press conference instead. He and Chavez used the occasion to denounce the idea of equal pay for similar jobs, or comparable worth, an issue much in the news at the time because of the clerical workers' strike at Yale University [see editorial, "Women of Yale," *The Nation*, December 1, 1984]. Pendleton called it the "looniest idea since Looney Tunes." Back in January, Abram had already announced his opposition to comparable worth at a commission press conference. In effect, those statements prejudged the issue, meaning that any future commission findings regarding comparable worth will have little credibility.

That press conference followed a widely publicized speech in which Pendleton had attacked black voters and certain black leaders for not supporting Reagan in the election. Even two from the usual majority couldn't stomach that one. They planned to raise the issue of violations of procedure at the commission's December meeting, but the chair canceled it.

I see little possibility that the commission will act any more independently in the near future than it has up to now. The majority and the staff director can be expected to say whatever is politically expedient. They have commissioned studies by consultants who have previously expressed views consistent with White House policy on civil rights. Instead of producing reports that will command broad respect from Congress and the public, they can be expected to support the Administration's retreat on civil rights protections.

The Commission on Civil Rights has become a parody of its former self, a politicized institution for the first time in its history. Contrary to Administration claims, the Reaganites' takeover of the commission did not stem from a battle about busing or quotas. Rather, they could not tolerate the commission's challenge on a number of points: the tax exemption for Bob Jones University, the White House's unprecedented refusal to supply information to the commission except under threat of subpoena, its opposition to ex-



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tending the Voting Rights Act in 1982, its attempts to lessen the protection against sex discrimination in education under Title IX and the removal of some remedies for victims of job discrimination. Until the majority of Americans are ready to take up the unfinished business of providing equality of opportunity in this society, the commission is unlikely to contribute to any further progress in civil rights. □

THATCHER'S 'ENEMY WITHIN'

British Miners Are Hanging Tough

JANE DIBBLIN

London

In March the strike by 120,000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers (N.U.M.) will be one year old. Unlike the last strike, in 1974—when there were massive power cuts, when British children were sent home from school, factories worked a three-day week and people ate by candlelight—the general public has so far experienced only minor inconveniences. That is because the Conservative Party, which began planning for a showdown with the miners even before it gained power in 1979, had accumulated large stockpiles of coal. (The Ridley Report, drafted by a Tory policy group and quoted in *The Economist* in 1978, indicates that the government had been planning for this confrontation for years.) There have been a number of brief outages, but the National Coal Board attributes those to "technical hitches." By burning oil reserves and rushing nuclear power plants into operation, the government has managed to avoid major power failures.

The brunt of the suffering has been borne by the strikers themselves. They and their families are surviving on tiny welfare payments (a mere £6.50 a week, or $7.60, for each child). Yet despite economic privation and police brutality, their support for the strike remains strong.

Most U.S. press coverage of the strike has failed to explain the issues involved. The strike was triggered by the closing of five pits. Miners felt that action ran counter to an agreement titled "Plan for Coal," intended to increase production in the mines. Although the plan was drawn up by the N.U.M. and the Labor government in 1974, it was ratified by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher when she took office. Last year, the board ordered the pits to shut down, saying they were "uneconomic," that is, unprofitable.

But there is much more at stake for both sides than the continued operation of five mines. For the Tories, the closings are part of a strategy to denationalize basic industries. Ultimately they would like to sell all the pits to private investors, as they plan to do with other government-owned concerns. Last year, for example, British Telecom was put on the block.

The Tories would also like to utilize oil and nuclear energy to a greater extent in generating electricity. Powerful multinationals like Shell Oil and British Petroleum have been lobbying strenuously for a switch to oil, even though it costs one-third more than coal. As for nuclear power, Thatcher favors it because with its development, Britain would be able to produce its own nuclear weapons. Also, the traditionally militant miners would lose their decisive hold on the nation's energy supply. The government would be dealing with white-collar employees at nuclear power plants, and Thatcher could break a strike—in the unlikely event that one should occur—by declaring a national emergency on the ground that the industry was vital to defense.

Perhaps most important, the government wants to bring the miners' union to its knees. Thatcher boasts that she once beat the "enemy without," the Argentines in the Falklands war; now she has her sights set on the "enemy within," as she calls the miners, who in the past have humiliated other Tory leaders, including Thatcher's present adversary, Edward Heath, whose government fell because of the 1974 strike. Breaking the miners would set an example to other unions and enhance her image as a strong leader who is disciplining the British for their own good.

The miners are equally determined. Many pits are located in areas with unemployment rates of more than 20 percent. Some of those communities have been hard hit recently by steel plant shutdowns. In Barnsley, Yorkshire, a quarter of the jobs are in mining and many others are dependent on the industry.

The miners' union contends that the coal board's reason for closing so-called uneconomic pits is specious. Because the bulk of British coal is sold to the government-controlled Central Electricity Generating Board (C.E.G.B.), they say, market considerations do not apply. And Oxford University economist Andrew Glynn has published a report demonstrating that the mines' apparent lack of profitability is a result of clever accounting by the coal board.

Britain's coal production has been declining for years. Between 1954 and 1978, it was cut nearly in half because of competition from imported oil, which was cheaper until the 1973 oil shock. The "Plan for Coal" aimed to increase production to reduce Britain's reliance on the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Then in September 1983, Ian MacGregor, former head of British Steel, was made chair of the coal board. MacGregor, who had halved the steel industry work force, set about "rationalizing" the coal industry in a similar fashion, laying off workers at the rate of 450 a week and ordering the five pits to close. The miners concluded that their survival was at stake and resorted to their only weapon, the strike.

The British media has portrayed the mineworkers' union as a one-man show, suggesting that fiery, outspoken president Arthur Scargill has forced a reluctant rank and file to strike. Although Scargill is indeed powerful, the strike was sparked by local walkouts in traditionally radical strongholds in Yorkshire and Scotland. Moreover, it began in March rather than in the winter, when it would have had the

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maximum impact, as a wily leader like Scargill is well aware.

That the majority of union members support their chief is borne out by opinion polls. After the strike had gone on for six months, three different polling agencies, including one commissioned by the rabidly right-wing *Sunday Express*, found that between 61 and 68 percent of the miners favored staying out.

One reason they have been able to hold on for so long is that they have tapped new sources of strength and solidarity. This will go down in history as the women's strike. In the United States, workingmen's wives formed effective auxiliaries during the great automobile strikes of the 1930s, but no such tradition exists in Britain. Last March, however, the miners' wives opened soup kitchens. Then they began raising funds and "twinning" with local branches of the Labor Party and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which provide financial aid and encouragement. As the women gained confidence, they joined the picket lines and addressed rallies around the country and abroad.

The miners appreciate what the women have done. Ollerton union organizer Jimmy Hood told a miners' meeting that women have been the backbone of the strike. "When I visited a women's support group to boost their morale, I came away with my own morale boosted," he said. "They're even stronger than us lads." But everyone on the platform with him was a man. And at another meeting, when women challenged a decision by the picket managers, one man exploded, "Who's running this bloody industrial action, the miners or the women?"

The important thing for the miners' wives is that for the first time they are working together. They now express their views publicly and have gained confidence in their abilities as organizers. The question is whether this political activism has affected the women's perceptions of themselves and of their power to influence events. Many of them say that the strike has changed their relationships with their husbands and families.

A cooperative relationship has developed between the mining women and the women at the Greenham Common peace encampment [see Sally Belfrage, "Down Among the 'Wimmin,'" *The Nation*, June 30, 1984]. The Greenham women have donated food and money to the mining women's organizations. Last summer, some children from Welsh mining villages vacationed with the families of a Greenham support group in London, and the Welsh parents have extended a reciprocal invitation to the London youngsters.

In addition, minority organizations have offered their support. The Camden Black Workers raised money and sent delegations to the pit villages. A Turkish group from North London brought shish kebab. Most mines are located in largely white areas, and although many families living there are deeply class conscious because of their own histories, they have had little exposure to people of other races. The black delegations' visits have shown them that workers of all backgrounds have common interests.

That awareness has been intensified by the miners' introduction to police brutality. Previously, such treatment was reserved for black people in Britain and Catholics in Northern Ireland. As of mid-January, there had been 9,114 arrests. The government has charged miners with breach of the peace, obstruction and more serious offenses like criminal damage and intimidation. Some of those arrests resulted from clashes between pickets and the police, but a large proportion occurred while striking miners were going about their everyday business or while they were traveling to other pit villages to picket. The purpose of the arrests is to discourage picketing. Miners who have been arrested and released and who show up at another strike site violate the conditions of their bail and could be arrested again.

The brutality of the police has come as a shock to many miners. In Grimethorpe, Yorkshire, townspeople were so angered by wholesale arrests by police in riot gear (even children had been handcuffed) that 200 of them attacked the local police station. On August 20, twelve writs were issued against two chief constables of other towns for various acts of brutality; one of them had handcuffed a 70-year-old retired miner so tightly that the man's hands had sweated blood.

Striking miners convicted on criminal charges receive a letter of dismissal from the coal board. Yet despite the longest and largest-scale police operation in British history, neither the government nor the coal board has invoked the draconian Tory employment laws, which forbid secondary picketing. The enforcement of those laws could shock the rest of the labor movement out of its apathy, something that applying the criminal code has failed to do.

As it is, other unions and the Labor Party have not provided the miners with the support that they expected—and that might have enabled them to win by now. Politicians and union chiefs utter fine words at national conferences,

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but no action results. Some members of the rail unions have refused to handle coal, oil or iron ore; there were two nationwide sympathy strikes by dock workers and a short-lived threat to strike from mine safety inspectors. But that has been it. The Thatcher years have taken their toll on union solidarity, what with right-wing leaderships and a rank and file fearful of losing their jobs.

The strike has exacerbated splits in the Labor Party, both in Parliament and in the local branches. It highlights the differences between those who think the party should be courting moderate voters (who get their information about the strike from the largely hostile press) and those who want it to be militant and maintain strong links to the unions.

The N.U.M. has also been damaged by its own mistakes. Scargill's consistent refusal to legitimize the strike with a national referendum has been criticized not only by the media but by the left as well. And a union official's foolish trip to Libya to meet with Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi severely dented morale. Mining families have made huge material and emotional sacrifices to continue the strike, and as a result, communities and families are bitterly divided. In December, the coal board, which has consistently exploited the miners' poverty, took out full-page advertisements promising Christmas bonuses and tax-free earnings for miners who returned to work. Reportedly, several thousand miners took up the offer, but the coal board and the union make such conflicting claims of the number involved that it is impossible to know which is right.

The fact that they made it through the Christmas season has instilled hope in the miners, but the strike seems to have settled into a long war of attrition. The stakes on both sides remain high. Many people in Britain see the strike as an important test of the left's ability to resist Tory attacks on trade unions. A defeat for the miners would be a significant spiritual as well as political blow. The miners are facing a government that views the $123 million a week the strike costs in additional oil purchases, lost industrial productivity and police overtime as a worthwhile political investment. It seems that investment may pay off. □

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DARPA'S BILLION-DOLLAR BET

Are 'Intelligent Weapons' Feasible?

PAUL N. EDWARDS

If the dreams of high-tech defense planners come true, future U.S. weapons will be able to see, talk and reason. Perfecting computerized artificial intelligences capable of guiding unmanned vehicles, understanding spoken English and planning battle strategy is the goal of the five-year, $600 million Strategic Computing Initiative (S.C.I.) announced by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in October 1983. The initiative is by far the largest and most ambitious coordinated artificial intelligence project in U.S. history. In all the world, only the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry's ten-year $850 million effort to develop such "fifth-generation" computers exceeds it. And if the first phase is a success, DARPA may pour an additional $400 million into university and industry research on strategic computing for five more years, between 1988 and 1993.

DARPA is no stranger to the field of computer science. Although explosive growth in the computer industry has been widely touted as a shining example of the virtues of private enterprise, DARPA money has backed a major proportion of advanced research since the agency was created, in 1958. Until recently, however, DARPA funded mainly basic research. Not until the Strategic Computing Initiative was unveiled by the weapons-minded Reagan Administration did the agency begin seeking computer technologies with specifically military applications.

The S.C.I. research is supposed to develop a high-tech weapon for each branch of the armed services. DARPA has promised the Army a robotic land vehicle able to navigate unfamiliar terrain and identify objects while traveling at sixty kilometers an hour. Such a machine might make reconnaissance missions or transport supplies without any human involvement. Suitably armed, it could function as a tank.

For the Air Force, DARPA plans to develop an intelligent "associate," a sort of electronic co-pilot. The system, which could be "trained" to serve an individual pilot's needs, would perform routine flight chores, monitor the plane's

Paul N. Edwards is a graduate student in the history of consciousness at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is planning a conference on defense research and computer technology, to be held in March by the Silicon Valley Research Group.

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systems and store a body of tactical information. The machine would be able to speak to the pilot in conversational English, even amid the noise of the cockpit.

For the Navy, DARPA proposes a combat management system for aircraft carrier battle groups. It would analyze the data compiled by the carrier's huge array of sensors (radar, satellites, other electronic detection systems), assess friendly and hostile force configurations and plan strategy. The system would make a reasoned explanation for its choices. It would also estimate the potential damages and casualties, and the likelihood of success, for each strategic option.

A number of formidable technical obstacles hinder the realization of these plans. The computers themselves must perform, at a minimum, hundreds of times faster than today's fastest machines yet be small enough, light enough and tough enough to be crammed into a jet or armored vehicle alongside the rest of its electronic guts. The "expert systems" software—programs that emulate human intelligence—required for vision, speech recognition and battle planning likewise demand vast increases in technological sophistication. In order to speed up computing time sufficiently, parallel-processing techniques, which enable computers to handle many instructions simultaneously rather than in a linear sequence, are needed. Those are still in an unrefined stage of development, however. The success of the entire project hinges on a series of technological breakthroughs that are currently in the realm of science fiction. Despite widespread skepticism among computer scientists about whether the S.C.I.'s goals can be attained, let alone in its ten-year timetable, DARPA is forging ahead with verve, cheerily pointing out that even partial success might mean major advances in computer technology.

Difficulties aside, however, the project raises serious political issues. In a position paper published last June, Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, a nationwide organization with more than 500 members, argued that DARPA has sidestepped the question of computer reliability. One motivation for the S.C.I. is to speed up the decision-making process; the computers it envisions would be "adaptable" and "flexible" in highly fluid and unpredictable military situations. In arguing the need for the initiative, DARPA cites President Reagan's ballistic missile defense plan, "where systems must react so rapidly that almost complete reliance will have to be placed on automated systems."

In other words, the agency has such confidence in artificial intelligence that it is pursuing technology that could place a key element of the nuclear trigger in the ghostly hands of a machine. The computer scientists' report, reviewing the many well-documented failures of existing nuclear warning systems—full-scale nuclear alerts have been set off by flocks of geese and even by a rising moon—contends:

> Any computer system, however complex, and whether or not it incorporates artificial intelligence, is limited in the scope of its actions and in the range of situations to which it can respond appropriately. This limitation is fundamental and leads to a very important kind of failure in reliability . . . having to do with limitations of design. . . . The primary insurance against accidents resulting from this kind of failure has been the involvement of people with judgment and common sense.

Nevertheless, should a Star Wars system ever be instituted, it would almost inevitably be controlled by computer. The time available for responding to a Soviet missile launch would be considerably less than the missiles' projected hundred-second boost phase, the only point in their trajectory at which they could be tracked accurately and shot down by U.S. defensive lasers. A computer malfunction would cause international confusion at the very least, and it could initiate all-out nuclear war, even if U.S. nuclear weapons were not fired immediately in a mistaken counterattack. Furthermore, such computer systems could not be battle-tested. All predictions about their reliability would be based on computer simulations and subject to all the limitations of the technology.

A less cosmic reason for concern is that the Strategic Computing Initiative represents a push by the Pentagon for greater control over the priorities of computer science research. Having no laboratories of its own, DARPA depends on the facilities and services of computer science departments at many major universities, of many large computer manufacturers and of military contractors like FMC Corporation, TRW and Martin Marietta. Its budget dwarfs those of the two other major American collaborations in fifth-generation computer research—the privately sponsored Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation and the state-funded Microelectronics Center of North Carolina—which are geared to commercial development and receive no Federal funds. The effect is to give the Pentagon dominance over the largest chunk of U.S. research

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and development work in this important field.

As a result, DARPA will be able to channel research into projects that are mainly of military value. One example is its commitment to developing gallium arsenide (GaAs) semiconductors. The agency is completing a pilot fabrication plant for GaAs microprocessors and plans to establish design rules for gallium arsenide very-large-scale integrated circuits. Because of its faster data-processing capability and lower power requirements, GaAs has the potential to be a better base for microchips than the silicon now in use, but it is costly and underdeveloped. Competing technologies such as Josephson junctions and advanced silicon techniques may negate the GaAs advantages. The military has an overriding interest in gallium arsenide, however, because unlike silicon, it resists the electromagnetic pulse effects of nuclear explosions. DARPA wants robots that can keep on fighting in the smoking debris of a nuclear holocaust.

Why, to take another example, does the Pentagon need the automated battlefield that strategic computing envisions? Lenny Siegel of the Pacific Study Center and John Markoff, an editor of *Byte*, speculate that

> though proponents of the automated battlefield concept argue that technological warfare is more effective than human combat, the Army's desire to automate is derived from politics. As the Vietnam War . . . demonstrated, Americans—be they soldiers or civilians—are hesitant to support wars of intervention in which the lives of American troops are threatened.

Before Congress, military planners plead the case for artificially intelligent weapons in terms of "productivity"—they are "force multipliers." But making warfare less costly in terms of soldiers' lives may make military intervention more acceptable.

DARPA has attempted to obscure the political dimensions of its plan with high-tech razzle-dazzle and posturing about the benefits artificial intelligence technology will bring to civilians. In a special issue of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers' magazine, *Spectrum*, in November 1983, S.C.I. project director Robert Kahn argued that new technology developed under the program will have many civilian uses, resulting in improvements in productivity, health care and education. He also pointed to the need to make the United States more competitive—a powerful prod, given that the Japanese fifth-generation project is two years ahad of our own. That is sheer obfuscation. A government-supported research program like Japan's, which aims to generate commercially valuable and socially useful products, might be desirable. But DARPA's project is two years ahead of our own. That is sheer obuses, is militaristic by nature. Weapons, not medicine and schools, are DARPA's present concern.

"The push to develop so-called 'intelligent' weapons," as the Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility notes, is only another "futile attempt to find a technological solution for what is, and will remain, a profoundly human political problem." The idea of an artificial intelligence more logical and reliable than our own is a seductive one, especially if we believe it could protect us from a nuclear Armageddon. Sadly, it cannot. Computer systems, delicate and programmed by humans, who can never anticipate every conceivable situation, will always be untrustworthy nuclear guardians. The solution lies, as it always has, in reducing the danger of war by putting weapons aside and expanding the possibilities for peaceful interchanges. □

Argentine

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

and badly beaten by thugs who belonged to a parapolice squad. Concerned about their safety, Bishop Jorge Novak sent one of the women to a seemingly safe place in a Buenos Aires suburb, but the same group of private cops found the house where she was staying and beat her a second time. They also threatened to kill Novak and two priests.

Novak shrugs off the death threats; he has received so many he has lost count of them. But he is troubled by the government's failure to do anything about the parapolice squad, whose members operate openly from a fleet of fifteen cars. Their assaults are by no means unusual. According to press estimates, at least 800 politically motivated attacks on civilians occurred last year, including bombings, kidnappings and torture. Government officials say the violence is the work of the "unemployed," Interior Minister Antonio Tróccoli's euphemism for the paramilitary and parapolice squads that operated under the previous regime. Few doubt that the military sponsors them, which may explain why the government has not arrested a single suspect.

The continuing violence bodes ill for Argentina's year-old democracy, and political analysts are pessimistic about Alfonsín's chances of survival. Not that the President is unpopular. Last November when he held a plebiscite on a territorial settlement he had reached with Chile, four-fifths of the voters approved of his action. But after more than a half-century of governing Argentina, the military is indifferent to the desires of the majority. Considering themselves the "natural custodians of Argentina," the armed forces have thrown out three elected governments since the 1930s. Judging from their ominous talk about Alfonsín's "pornographic democracy"—the right's pejorative phrase for a system that allows free speech—they may well be planning to make his the fourth.

Jacobo Timerman, the Argentine editor who was imprisoned and tortured by the military regime in the late 1970s because of his defense of human rights, says Alfonsín may yet stand history on its head by mobilizing mass demonstrations whenever a coup seems imminent, a tactic used by President Juan Domingo Perón in the 1940s. But Argentines lack the will to confront army tanks. Paralyzed by fear and fatalism, most of the citizenry remained silent when earlier coups occurred. Many actually welcomed the 1976 coup which installed the architects of the dirty war, and few protested the military regime's repression of the

Penny Lernoux is The Nation*'s Latin America correspondent and the author of* In Banks We Trust *(Doubleday).*

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HIGHLIGHTS

Last June, The Nation Fact-Finders visited Israel and returned with an enriched understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict and of Israeli and Palestinian society. Tour participants met with many Israelis and Palestinians including: Labor Member of Knesset Abba Eban, Likud MK Ehud Olmert, feminist and civil rights activist MK Shulamit Aloni, Director General of the Foreign Ministry David Kimche, Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem, deposed Mayor Karim Khalaf of Ramallah, author A.B. Yehoshua, Bir Zeit University Prof. Salim Tamari, and researcher Meron Benvenisti. Here's what some Fact-Finders veterans had to say afterward:

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civilian opposition, although an estimated 30,000 Argentines disappeared during "the process." Unlike Chile, where the people have organized a series of demonstrations against Gen. Augusto Pinochet, only a small band of human rights activists opposed the Argentine dictatorship, which fell of its own weight. Divided and humiliated by their defeat by Britain in the 1982 war for the Falkland Islands and facing an enormous economic mess, the generals decided to return to the barracks. As the military has since made clear, it was only a temporary retreat.

James Neilson, editor of the *Buenos Aires Herald*, one of the few publications to speak out against the repression, attributes the Argentines' lack of political backbone to widespread belief that "the country owes them a lot, and if they don't get it, it's the government's fault." He adds, "There is no sense of civic responsibility and no responsible ruling class."

Many Argentines blame Alfonsín's government for runaway inflation and the high cost of living, even though the country's economic problems originated under military rule. Upper-class Argentines openly express their preference for the previous government, with which they had more influence. As noted by journalist Carlos Rodríguez, who hosts a radio show popular among poor people, the armed forces have traditionally served the wealthy as a praetorian guard, keeping the peasants and the workers poor and submissive. In that task they have succeeded. According to statistics that were suppressed under the junta and recently released by the Alfonsín government, one-third of Argentina's 27 million people are undernourished and live in acute poverty despite the fact that the country is so rich it could easily feed most of South America.

The military leaders inhabit a dark, conspiratorial world in which social realities rarely intrude. They propound a pseudo-fascist theory called the Doctrine of National Security, which holds that World War III has already begun and that the Christian forces of the West are locked in a struggle with communism. The enemy is anyone who thinks differently from them; so to save Argentina, the military must wipe out all signs of dissent.

If that theory sounds paranoid, it makes sense to military men nurtured on Perón's fascism and a conservative, inquisitorial form of Catholicism. The military also reflects Argentina's pervasive sense of isolation, which results in a grandiose view of their country as occupying the world's center stage.

Alfonsín's critics contend that he should have set about destroying the repressive apparatus as soon as he took office. But even if the President and his well-meaning middle-class supporters in the Radical Party had had the guts to attempt such a crackdown, a wholesale conversion to democracy in the military would not have resulted. Conversion implies repentance, and military leaders say they have nothing to be sorry for, that they were saving the nation from communist subversion. Thus when Alfonsín ordered a military tribunal to try nine members of the previous junta, the judges ruled that they had done "nothing objectionable" and had not violated any law when issuing orders to break the civilian opposition. Although the Federal Court of Appeals in Buenos Aires subsequently ruled that the cases should be tried under civilian law, convictions remain doubtful, since most of the judges are appointees of the junta. Moreover, any judge finding them guilty would risk assassination. Other government officials who have tried to investigate military crimes committed during the junta's rule have been the victims of death threats, bombings and attempted kidnapping.

However their case is resolved, the nine former junta members were merely the overseers of the machinery of brutality. Hundreds of middle-level officers carried out their bidding—men like Capt. Alfredo Astiz of the navy, who has been charged with the murder of Dagmar Hagelin, a Swedish teen-ager, and is implicated in the disappearance of two French nuns who worked with the families of the disappeared. Astiz was found innocent by a military tribunal in 1981 on the ground that he was following orders. Human rights groups strongly contested that whitewash, citing the precedent set at the Nuremberg trials. But if Astiz's treatment is a barometer of the government's determination to prosecute those responsible, the relatives of the disappeared have little hope that their demands for justice will receive a fair hearing. The civil judge appointed to review Astiz's case bucked it back to the military court, which had already ruled in the captain's favor. New evidence introduced by Hagelin's father will not affect the case because military tribunals refuse to accept testimony from the families of the disappeared, claiming they are "potential security risks."

Following the advice of his mentor, the late Radical Party chief Ricardo Balbín, Alfonsín appears willing to draw a curtain over the bloody past so long as the nine ex-junta members receive some kind of symbolic punishment. Eduardo Rabossi, Under Secretary for Human Rights, has all but admitted that the government is considering an amnesty for all who committed atrocities in the dirty war. Alfonsín has also refused to make public a list of 1,351 "repressers," mostly military officers, compiled by a government-appointed commission on the disappeared and based on 50,000 pages of testimony from survivors of the junta's concentration camps. Government sources say that at most, one hundred names will be published. Most damning of all, Alfonsín failed even to mention justice or human rights in his year-end speech.

Alfonsín may believe that silence will buy time, but political analysts say it will be taken as a sign of weakness. "In closing the door on the disappeared, Alfonsín is opening it to the military," said Renée Epelbaum, whose three children are among those who vanished. "The government says it does not want any conflicts, but trying to be too benevolent with the armed forces just encourages their insolence, and now they're starting to present themselves as the saviors of the country again."

Last October, Alfonsín's opponents flexed their muscles at a mass in Buenos Aires at which 1,500 active and retired officials heard the Rev. Julio Triviño openly urge a coup. Aroused by the priest's incendiary words, the officials

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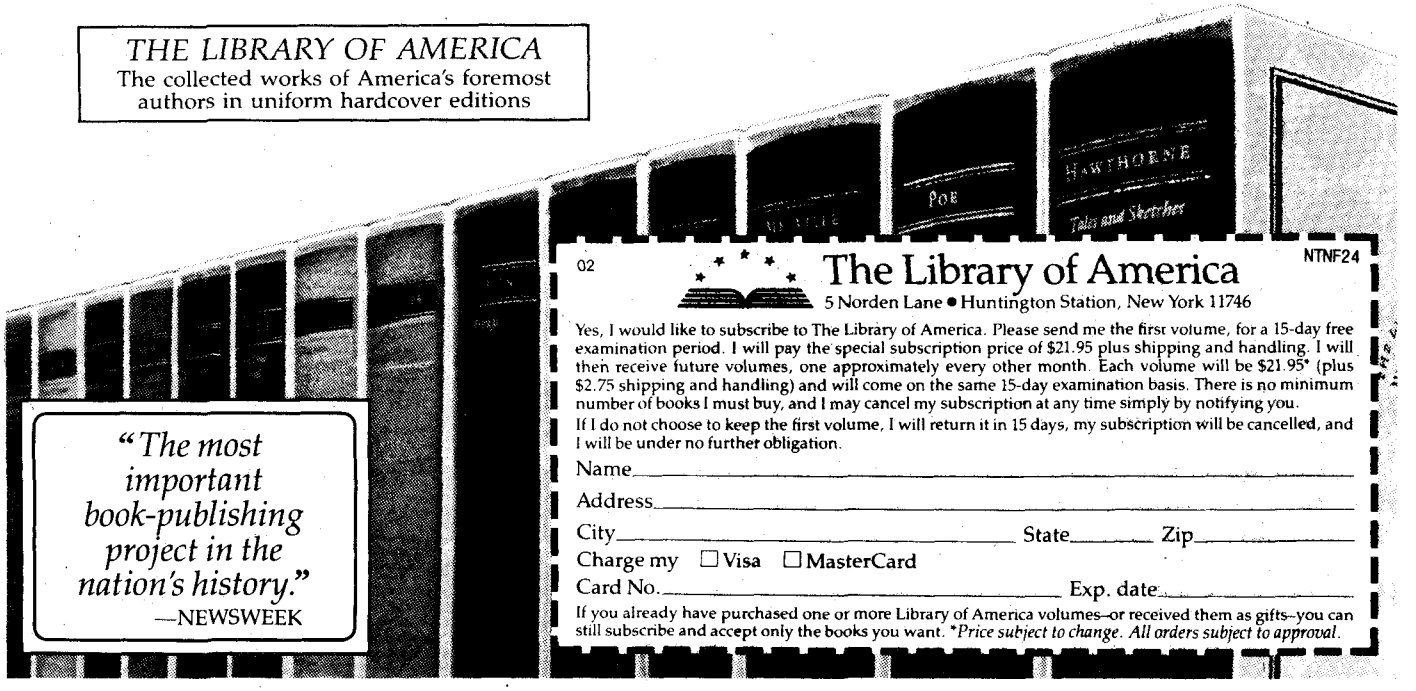

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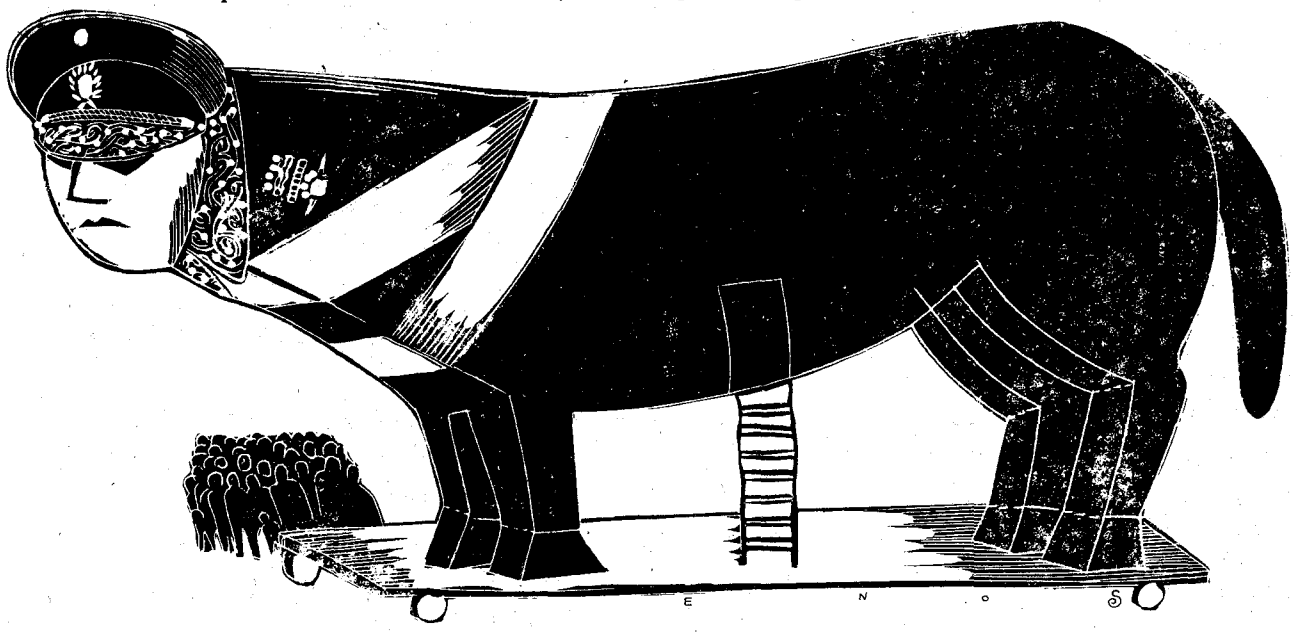
shouted, "Death to Alfonsín!" and threatened journalists present with "M.M.," meaning *muchos más muertes*, or "many more deaths"—an allusion to the fate of the disappeared. The Rev. Antonio Puigjané, a Capuchin monk who works with the families of the missing, told me: "This is no joke but a tremendous threat. If there were 30,000 disappeared last time, the next time there will be 300,000." Even the normally complacent Interior Minister Tróccoli admitted he was alarmed by the "incitement to a coup." Nevertheless, the government took no disciplinary action against those present. As for the reactionary Catholic hierarchy, its last pastoral letter repeated Triviño's ravings against "pornography" and attacked Alfonsín's government for "ideologizing" education with "materialistic methods," meaning student councils and free debate.

The hierarchy's increasing hostility is just one more trouble on a growing pile. Alfonsín is still a long way from resolving the economic crisis caused by the country's $45 billion foreign debt, despite prodding from the International Monetary Fund. He is further burdened by an immature political opposition, which is led by the divided and quarrelsome Peronist movement and the largely corrupt Peronist union leadership. Whole sectors of the bureaucracy are holdovers from the military regime, representing "a Trojan horse," in Epelbaum's words, capable of sabotaging the government's policies—a view confirmed off the record by many officials loyal to Alfonsín. Most of the police and intelligence agencies are staffed by people who participated in the repression; some of them have even been promoted. Many retired police and military officers run private security agencies. One example is Magister. According to human rights lawyer Emilio Mignone, president of the Center of Legal and Social Studies, it was established by the former head of SIDE, the state intelligence agency, with 300 of his former employees. The Abuelas of the Plaza de Mayo, representing the grandmothers of the disappeared, allege that one of Magister's directors, now in hiding, holds the daughter of a woman who gave birth while interned at a SIDE concentration camp named Automotores Orletti, and that Automotores' three directors ran Magister.

The contradictory forces at work in Argentine society send confused signals to those who wish Alfonsín's democracy well. In foreign affairs, for example, he has come out strongly in favor of the Contadora peace process in Central America, yet army officers sent to Honduras by the junta are still training Nicaraguan *contras*. According to the well-informed Argentine weekly *El Periodista*, the officers there remain in touch with military commanders in Buenos Aires. *El Periodista* also reported that Col. Osvaldo Riveiro, who was photographed during *contra* training exercises, has been promoted to assistant director of the army's second command.

The failure to arrest any of those responsible for the current violence has cowed many Argentines, including high-ranking officials. The government's civilian chief of intelligence, Roberto Pena, told the press that paramilitary groups have entered his home on two occasions since he took office, but he refused to discuss the matter. "If this had been during the dictatorship, we would have closed all the windows and locked the door before talking to you," one of a group of nuns told me as street noise filtered through the open windows. "But we're still afraid to state publicly what we think because there might be another coup."

Jacobo Timerman says that many Argentine reporters are afraid to write the truth, preferring to use euphemisms like "the process" to refer to the dirty war. While Bishop Novak agrees with Timerman's complaint, he wonders if a deeper malaise accounts for people's timidity, one reflected in the Argentines' pervasive apathy about their society. Alfonsín is probably correct in concluding that the majority of citizens are more interested in their weekly take-home pay than in the fate of the disappeared, particularly since the belief lingers that those people "must have done something." For Novak, such disinterest is an indication of the extent to which Argentines have retreated from fundamental values: "Justice is one of the great institutions of humanity. Unless we commit ourselves as a people to its achievement, we will go on being doomed to the justice of the firing squad." □



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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Mixed Nuts

AARON LATHAM

SECRET AGENDA: Watergate, Deep Throat and the CIA. *By Jim Hougan. Random House. 313 pp. $19.95.*

Jim Hougan's *Secret Agenda*, which was published with a great deal of P.R. hocus-pocus this winter, is a Watergate conspiracy book that reads like a Kennedy assassination conspiracy book. By which I mean that it seems to have been written by a pecan or an acorn or a peanut or some other small-bore nut. American nightmares have a way of being transmuted over time into national nonsense.

I have a theory that the assassination nuts will not rest until they have pinned the Kennedy killing on the right (preferably on Nixon). And the Watergate nuts will not rest until they have pinned the fall of Nixon on the left (preferably on a Kennedy).

I called Bob Woodward to ask him what he thought of the new book.

"It's baffling," Woodward said. "It's puzzling. It's wacky. It's insane. It's one of these turds in the soup."

I will try to explain Hougan's conspiracy theory, but I warn you that making sense out of nonsense is not easy. Hougan says the Central Intelligence Agency "penetrated" the Committee to Re-elect the President. Working undercover at CREEP, these C.I.A. agents decided to spy on a certain prostitution ring that operated out of the Columbia Plaza Apartments. The Columbia Plaza whorehouse was strategically located next door to the Watergate complex that housed the Democratic National Committee. The prostitutes supposedly did a lot of business with important Democrats.

Hougan alleges that the prostitutes even arranged a kind of "marriage" between Columbia Plaza and the Watergate—they supposedly had a contact with the D.N.C. to fix them up with Democratic officials. So, according to Hougan, someone at the D.N.C. was working both to get Democrats elected and to get them laid. And this someone was better at the latter.

The C.I.A. spooks at CREEP decided to bug and otherwise monitor the whores at Columbia Plaza and their political clients. In other words, the CREEP penetrators penetrated the whorehouse where pols were penetrating prostitutes. So far so good. The problems began when the White House asked the spooks at CREEP to bug the D.N.C. Which meant they would be bugging their whores' clients. Which meant their whorehouse operation might be exposed. Which might have put the Best Little Whorehouse in the C.I.A. out of business. Horrors.

So the C.I.A. decided to sabotage the Watergate break-in. Better to sacrifice the White House than the whorehouse. Of course. And that is Hougan's conspiracy theory. He writes:

> In effect, the snake had swallowed its tail: CIA agents working under cover of the CRP came to be targeted against their own operation by the very organization that unwittingly provided them with cover. All that the agents could do was to stall and, when all else failed, blow their own cover. Whereupon the White House, lacking deniability, attempted to cover up—with the result that it was soon buried.

Sure. The C.I.A. decided to protect its prostitutes instead of its President. Unfortunately, there are a few problems with the book other than not making sense. One of these problems is the lack of evidence.

"Who's his witness?" Woodward asked. "What's his piece of paper? Where's his tape?"

According to Hougan, all the tapes were erased, all the pieces of paper

Aaron Latham is the author of Orchids for Mother *(Little, Brown), a* roman à clef *about the Central Intelligence Agency.*

TRAVEL

Sir, to find an answer
is not easy among the nervous mass.
Draw near the exile, note his fingers

manicured in pavilions, and the feet
in soft shoes shod. Often from lands
he departs in vanity's offices, knowing

the luxury of refusal; yet how easy
to mistake for courage is fear's glance.
The milk-brick walls

call the hotel creatures into form—
the hourly animals, awake at nine,
brunching at pond-side tables on carp:

a vested hippo, an Anglican giraffe,
the neurasthenic elk beneath their veils.
They too recede, with their daring clothes

and ridiculous manners, footnotes
to footnotes in the loose masonry
of scholarship. Where even accidental poise

receives the imprimatur of history's architect,
who sees beyond careless wanderings
the emotional clatterings of the age?

Fashion alters politics or love:
like sexual anxiety, what is lost
is not so much abandoned as converted

at the Bureau de Change, one currency
for another, tawdry bills commemorating
a presidential fool or dowdy queen.

William Logan

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burned or shredded, and the prime witness is dead. It is ever so with conspiracy advocates. And yet an incredible number of papers and tapes and talkative witnesses did somehow manage to survive. But not one of them corroborates Hougan's theory.

Hougan's dead witness was a hard-luck private eye named Louis J. Russell, who was supposedly a friend of the Columbia Plaza whores as well as a friend of Watergate burglar James McCord. This is the kind of coincidence conspiracy nuts live for. It of course follows in a conspiracy nut's mind that Russell must have bugged the whorehouse for McCord. Unfortunately, Russell died a couple of years ago and so Hougan was not able to interview him, having come to the Watergate story somewhat late.

But Woodward interviewed Russell.

"I talked to him in a bar in Montgomery County," Woodward remembers. "He wanted to make it appear he was in on something, but he didn't know anything."

At the end of his book, Hougan quotes a source who says Woodward "was in naval intelligence." And he goes on to speculate that Deep Throat was probably in naval intelligence, too.

But . . . "I wasn't in naval intelligence," Woodward says. "It just isn't so."

I am left wondering if much of the book just isn't so.

"It's the Flat Earth Society of Watergate," Woodward says. "He looks out his window and says, 'It looks flat here. It must be flat everywhere.'" It's time to put such silliness to rest before someone writes a book to the effect that Lee Harvey Oswald's accomplice was Deep Throat. □

Under Fire

THOMAS DEPIETRO

THE MINIMAL SELF: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times. *By Christopher Lasch. W.W. Norton. 317 pp. $16.95.*

Christopher Lasch's career divides neatly in two, or so many of his radical critics would have us believe. In their view, the early Lasch was a masterful revisionist historian whose books *The New Radicalism in America* and *The Agony of the American Left* helped define the limitations of liberal reform and radical rebellion in the 1960s and described the previous decade's sordid alliance between cold war liberal intellectuals and their anticommunist brethren. The second Lasch, and the one his hostile critics will encounter in his new book, revealed himself in 1977 with *Haven in a Heartless World*, displaying there what appeared to be a dangerous interest in psychoanalysis which seemed all the worse for veiling the author's nostalgia for nineteenth-century bourgeois patriarchy. Lasch's alleged flirtation with reaction was accelerated, in this view, by *The Culture of Narcissism*, a jeremiad of decline delivered, we were told, by a "mean-spirited" social critic bent on ridiculing the richness of contemporary cultural opportunity. Those charges, in one form or another, have been around for quite some time, especially in the pages of *Telos*, *The New Left Review* and *Socialist Review*.

A different kind of attack on Lasch as an academic kill-joy may be found in the work of liberal social critic Peter Clecak who, in his well-received book, *America's Quest for the Ideal Self* (1983), found Lasch a perfect foil for his celebration of contemporary styles of self-fulfillment. What is it exactly about Lasch's recent work that provokes such spleen? The answer has a lot to do with our sense of the era that has shaped not just most of his work but also many of our lives—those parlous times generally known as "the sixties." That hard-to-define decade counts among its most ardent defenders both radical swingers and techno-crazy neoliberals, all of whom celebrate the now mainstream liberatory and therapeutic ethos so roundly criticized by Lasch. Certainly he is aware of their animosity and the reasons for it, which accounts in part for the beleaguered posture he displays in his perceptive new book, *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times*. The title alone, with its teasing suggestion of a self-help manual, may well seem to be another example of intellectual one-upmanship by a politically marginal malcontent.

But if you agree that the Age of Reagan warrants a profound reconsideration of liberal and radical ideologies and that it hasn't entirely captured the soul of America because it still hasn't relieved our pervasive sense of malaise, then Lasch's book, and the debate it engages, surely demands your attention. Its analysis of what has been wrong with so many well-intentioned efforts to counter the "disasters" that threaten our lives should force those of us on the left to renew our political commitments, including the commitment to fundamental democratic values which Lasch affirms and which the right so consistently attacks. According to Lasch, the menacing features of contemporary life, whether addictive consumerism or the threat of nuclear disaster, sometimes lead liberals and leftists to support the very evils they ostensibly seek to undermine, in the one case by glorifying consumption as truly liberating and in the other by wallowing in doomsday scenarios.

In *The Minimal Self*, Lasch addresses the complaint of many people that their lives seem increasingly out of their control. He argues that in searching for a remedy to this vague social ill we usually ignore the inequalities and injustices that occasion it. The urgency of our quest frequently results in the kinds of enthusiasms and solutions Lasch sets out to debunk here—everything from the cultural pluralism of Clecak on the left to the unquestioning faith in technology found among neoliberal experts in crisis management. Filtered through Lasch's critical lens, the film *My Dinner With Andre* becomes an excellent illustration of popular responses to the real and imagined crises of our time. Its poignant dialogue between two appealing dinner companions contrasts quotidian resignation with apocalyptic activism. But, as Lasch points out, both Wally and Andre suggest that freedom from overwhelming despair depends on nothing more than an alteration in life style. And this attitude typifies the new technology of selfhood endorsed by so many self-styled experts (both technocrats and social critics) who propose an even loftier agenda of free choices, equal opportunities and limitless resources. Lasch exposes their sham egalitarianism as one more apology for endless consumption. Their most cherished nostrums, which flood the intellectual marketplace, promise little hope for a better future, he warns, in a declaration of the need for genuinely

Thomas DePietro has written for Commonweal, In These Times, Mother Jones *and* The Georgia Review.

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democratic political action.

This call for political protest and change—sounded throughout the book—may seem a weak salvo in the war on mass despondency, especially in light of what seemed to be Lasch's relentless negativism in *The Culture of Narcissism*. But the contradiction disappears if we look at the crucial distinction that animates all his work: the distinction between cultural radicalism and political radicalism. Lasch's analysis of the 1960s, which informs even his somber diagnosis of the 1980s in *The Minimal Self*, derives from the disturbing sense that for many radicals, cultural rebellion is often a substitute for political rebellion (as it was for the progressive intellectuals so well portrayed in *The New Radicalism*). Even those Marxists who hold out hope for a political revolution led by a vanguard seem to Lasch unwitting supporters of the status quo.

In *The Minimal Self*, as in *The Culture of Narcissism*, Lasch levels his criticism at the false prophets of cultural salvation whose windy predictions often seem the only legacy of the New Left. Here, then, is the source of so much of the confusion among Lasch's critics: his jaundiced look at the New Leftovers of the 1970s and 1980s is often seen as a wholesale indictment of the preceding decade as well. But that's clearly not his view. For Lasch, the promise of radical democracy—the hope instilled at Port Huron and its subsequent manifestations in the antinuclear, environmental and feminist movements—still moves among many Americans, particularly among those who are largely ignored by the liberal and radical elite. Convinced that political change will come from ordinary people relying on common sense, Lasch has disturbed the elite whose collective personality serves as the main source for his complex psychosocial profile.

By virtue of its breathtaking scope, *The Culture of Narcissism* lends itself to caricature as a moral outcry against these supposedly self-centered hedonists. More narrowly focused and scholarly, and therefore less likely a candidate for best-seller lists, *The Minimal Self* moves away from such sloganeering and pop reduction. We learn here that Lasch's narcissists suffer not from too much self, as was often alleged, but from a steady disintegration of selfhood. The siege mentality that results from such psychic decay manifests itself not only in the obviously paranoid fantasies of right-wing survivalists but in the socially and intellectually acceptable idea that we are all victims of one sort or another. In that supposedly enlightened view, life is a series of debilitating crises which we must cope with one day at a time. Behind both popular evocations of the Holocaust and the deliberate extremism of minimalist esthetics, Lasch discerns a misguided effort to justify human survival at any cost—an effort which thereby diminishes the possibility of worthwhile art and debases the memory of genuine suffering. Here again he demonstrates a remarkable ability to draw provocative evidence from a number of disciplines—from his nuanced exploration of Thomas Pynchon's "resigned acceptance of irreversible decline" to his critique of the sociobiological "technology of survival" outlined in Terrence Des Pres's *The Survivor*.

In a way, Lasch's willingness to straddle disciplines serves a political point as well. Time and again he acknowledges Harry Braverman's pathbreaking study, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (1974), for its profoundly radical analysis of postindustrial society.

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What Braverman understood about modern labor management also applies, in Lasch's view, to almost every other sphere of life. That is, the historical division of labor—the reduction of work into discrete tasks with no single worker responsible for planning and execution—forced capital to develop new forms of worker control as well as new means by which disgruntled laborers could find personal satisfaction. It led, in other words, to a culture of consumption organized and disciplined by a new professional elite: the social workers and advertising executives, the psychologists and public relations experts who gladly serve the interests of the liberal corporate state. Lasch's comprehensiveness in his recent works, his refusal to accept an intellectual division of labor, stands therefore as an admirable example of meaningful rebellion.

The Minimal Self's defensive tone suggests Lasch's respect for his more responsible critics. Much of the book is a direct address to the toughest among them, from neopluralist Clecak to the radical feminists of the left-wing journals. His radical politics, made more explicit in *The Minimal Self*, reject the misappropriation of his earlier work by the managerial elite (including President Jimmy Carter) who sought to employ it in their war on the social problems they themselves created. By also confronting those who understand him quite well, Lasch places his ongoing critical project—an analysis of American cultural history—within the urgent intellectual debates of our time. The defense of mass culture as an expression of pluralist vitality, the celebration of "feminine" virtue as an alternate to "masculine" vice, the promotion of the therapeutic style as a cure for everyday unhappiness—these are just a few of the current orthodoxies opposed in *The Minimal Self*. And perhaps Lasch's unpopularity on the left amounts to nothing more than a sense of discomfort with his refusal to adhere to any fashionable configuration of politics and culture.

Lasch's shift in *The Minimal Self* from narrow description to broad prescription leads him, at the end, to defend not only radical politics but also the traditional cultural institutions and ideas that he feels are likely to generate such politics: family, community and church, though certainly not in their often debased and punitive contemporary forms. Similarly, meaningful work, a sane response to the environment and a definition of selfhood that accommodates tension, division and conflict all hold out the best prospects for genuine democratic renewal. Despite Lasch's thoroughly persuasive substantiation of this position in the second half of *The Minimal Self*, many liberals and leftists will no doubt continue to ignore his relatively mundane plea. His tactical realism, in its very simplicity, defies progressivist faith in a complex though brighter future. His sober glance backward through history challenges radical nostalgia for the recently departed past. □

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Maximum Exposure

THOMAS M. DISCH

WHITE NOISE. *By Don DeLillo. Viking. 326 pp. $16.95.*

White Noise is as funny and as dramatically satisfying as a collection of the year's best *New Yorker* cartoons. It is a rum-soaked fruitcake packed with comic monologues, one-liners and shticks, all delivered in the same droller-than-life tone of mock-intellectual aphorizing. This uniform style of dialogue becomes as characteristic and signatory as the cartooning style of Charles Addams, Roz Chast or George Booth.

Here, as a proof of the pudding, is one of the passages that moved me past the snort and the chuckle stages of enjoyment to full lung-participatory laughter:

> "I hate my face," a woman [on a call-in radio show] said. "This is an ongoing problem with me for years. Of all the faces you could have given me, lookswise, this one has got to be the worst. But how can I not look? Even if you took all my mirrors away, I would still find a way to look. How can I not look on the one hand? But I hate it on the other. In other words I still look. Because whose face is it, obviously? What do I do, forget it's there, pretend it's someone else's? What I'm trying to do with this call, Mel, is find other people who have a problem accepting their face. Here are some questions to get us started. What did you look like before you were born? What will you look like in the afterlife, regardless of race or color?"

The media are a pervasive presence in *White Noise*, and may indeed be its true subject (rather than death and the apocalyptic imagination, its ostensible subject). DeLillo shrewdly delineates the way the modern mind adjusts to a daily infusion of bad news, from the death of God to the slow metamorphosis of the nation into one big Love Canal. Comedy this black can always be accused of callousness, and history has underscored this for DeLillo by producing, simultaneously with his book, an "airborne toxic event" in India that will inevitably shape readers' responses to DeLillo's depiction of a similar crisis in an American suburb.

DeLillo's "airborne toxic event," which is presented as the centerpiece of his novel, is witnessed from the perspective of a suburban family fleeing a black cloud of Nyodene D., a chemical whose toxic properties change with each new newscast on the radio. It causes sweaty palms, "urgent lumps" and episodes of *déjà vu*. The scenes of suburbia in turmoil are plausible and amusing; then the cloud of Nyodene D. is dispersed and the novel resumes its course. It is hard not to contrast this chimerical crisis to events in Bhopal. That DeLillo's cartooned catastrophe survives the comparison as well as it does is due to his insistence on showing the sense in which all public events are merely a branch of show business—until one's own eggs are scrambled. And even then . . . But DeLillo is always his own best explainer. Here is his view of the matter, as delivered by Alfonse Stompanato, the chairman of the department of American environments at an imaginary university (Stompanato has been asked why "decent, well-meaning and responsible people find themselves intrigued by catastrophe

Thomas M. Disch's most recent novel is The Businessman: A Tale of Terror *(Harper & Row).*

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when they see it on television"):

> Because we're suffering from brain fade. We need an occasional catastrophe to break up the incessant bombardment of information. . . .
>
> The flow is constant. . . . Words, pictures, numbers, facts, graphics, statistics, specks, waves, particles, motes. Only a catastrophe gets our attention. We want them, we need them, we depend on them. As long as they happen somewhere else. This is where California comes in. Mud slides, brush fires, coastal erosion, earthquakes, mass killings, et cetera. We can relax and enjoy these disasters because in our hearts we feel that California deserves whatever it gets. Californians invented the concept of life-style. This alone warrants their doom. . . .
>
> Japan is pretty good for disaster footage. . . . India remains largely untapped. They have tremendous potential with their famines, monsoons, religious strife, train wrecks, boat sinkings, et cetera. But their disasters tend to go unrecorded. Three lines in the newspaper. No film footage, no satellite hookup. This is why California is so important.

In the category of oft-thought-but-ne'er-so-cruelly-expressed, *White Noise* offers literally hundreds of passages as quotable as the foregoing, and if you have enjoyed this sampling, you'll surely enjoy the book. But don't expect a story. By relegating pain and death to the category of media events, DeLillo has painted himself into a dramaturgical corner that inhibits all large gestures. In a comic showdown with a villain who has remained an offstage presence until the penultimate chapter, DeLillo strives for the kind of black farce patented by Nabokov, but the scene is a fiasco. DeLillo is an excellent ventriloquist, but when he tries to operate a puppet theater he gets tangled in the strings.

A worse blemish, because it is not confined to a single chapter, is the narrator's expressed (but not communicated) fear of death, a fear that becomes the prevailing metaphor of the last half of the book. Death, however, has lost most of its sting in DeLillo's postmodern cartoon landscape, where no character could say "*Timor mortis conturbat me*" without feeling obliged to follow up with a wisecrack. Basically, DeLillo has too hearty an appetite for the junk food of modern life for death to be a serious bother to him. He would seem to believe, with Roosevelt, that we have nothing to fear but fear itself, a very cheering and American sentiment which he has expressed in a cheering and very American book. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Jonathan Borofsky

In 1982, a spectacularly meretricious exhibition of forty-odd hot artists was mounted in West Berlin under the depressingly exact title *Zeitgeist*. Housed in the war-scarred Martin-Gropius-Bau, an ornate neo-Renaissance relic of the nineteenth century, *Zeitgeist* cynically exploited the natural political symbolism of its locale. The shell-gouged facade of the Gropius-Bau faces the archetypically gray Eastern European edifices on the other side of the Berlin wall; it is separated from them by a desolate patch of weeds dotted by truncated columns and a headless statue. In an adjoining vacant lot, bleak as a flintscape by Beckett, a tattered sign in four languages marks the site of Gestapo torture chambers. Decades of wall-writers have scribbled subdued and diffident graffitti—both political and scatological—on the terrible periphery of the unholy city. The Brandenburg Gate is not far away; Checkpoint Charlie stands at about the same distance in the opposite direction. Under the shallow, glazed dome of the building's atrium, arrayed along the two-tiered colonnaded gallery, were hung and placed the art works being promoted by the show. The not very carefully concealed motive of the enterprise was to proclaim that contemporary European art, particularly West German art, was commercially viable and ready to compete with the work of the dominant hot Americans.

Art has always been a business, and successful artists have owed their success as much to acumen as to talent or even genius—think of Monet or Picasso—but what made *Zeitgeist* so rebarbative an enterprise was its cheerful appropriation of Germany's unspeakable political symbolism to reflect an unmerited importance on shallow art works. The artists themselves, nearly all members of the Neo-Expressionist fraternity, were characteristically lurid and brash, and their use of strident symbolisms in the interest of self-proclamation was a bench mark of the collective style. But the entrepreneurs of *Zeitgeist* raised all that to a power undreamed of by the artists, who began to look almost modest by comparison with their handlers. In the crass degradation of meaning, *Zeitgeist* passed from tastelessness into evil. It may even have left a queasy feeling in the normally strong stomach of the art world.

Of the ten Americans exhibited, the one who seemed most to rise to the occasion rather than exemplify it was Jonathan Borofsky. In that context his three works appeared powerfully symbolic. Hovering over the glass dome and thus visible from within the main courtyard, Borofsky had placed a huge silhouetted effigy of what looked like a salesman, with overcoat, soft hat and briefcase. Just outside a window on the second floor there was a figure of a flying man, ambiguous as to whether it was fleeing the exhibition or heading for East Berlin. Finally, painted on the wall itself, and leaving visible what I suppose was independently written graffitti (TRASH), was a figure, "Running Man," handsomely if primitively executed in gray with black hatching. Since

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they were situated *outside* the Gropius-Bau, all of these works might have been taken to express the wish to put some distance between the exhibit and themselves; and since each of them takes on, or appears to take on in that atmosphere, a political or even moral significance, it would have been difficult not to ascribe to Borofsky's work exactly the seriousness and weight flaunted by the exhibition itself.

So it is altogether surprising that the very images that carried so palpable a charge at *Zeitgeist* dissipate into frivolity when they appear in other contexts, such as Borofsky's current grand exposure at the Whitney Museum in New York City. (The show originated at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, will go on to the University Art Museum in Berkeley, California, then to the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and from there to the Corcoran Gallery in Washington next year.) Here "Running Man" dashes, like an acrylic streaker, past an enlarged and rather comical painting of "The Maidenform Woman" reviewing the troops in her greatcoat and lace underthings. The "Man with a Briefcase" stands blankly about like an aluminum cutout, and the little flying figure looks as though he has escaped nothing grimmer than FAO Schwarz—or at worst, Disneyland.

What this show, in contrast to *Zeitgeist*, makes plain is *not* that the same images carry different symbolic charges in different contexts, but that Borofsky's images refer us at best to one another and finally simply to the artist himself. The apparent meaning they conveyed at *Zeitgeist* was only an accident of juxtaposition, for the works are actually no more than recurrent elements in Borofsky's dreams, and like dream images they refer us to moments in the mental life of the dreamer. The show is simply the man himself, distributed through four vast rooms. Borofsky is the most confessional and autobiographical of contemporary artists, and his work, like his personality, must be taken as a whole. "All is One" is a phrase he often employs (he sometimes writes it in Persian) to impose unity on as heterogenous an assemblage of objects as one could imagine a single person capable of producing. "You are alone" is another Borofskyan phrase, part of a word painting, which has as its bottom line "There is no one to please but your[self]." What we have then is Jonathan Borofsky, alone, pleasing him[self]. It is less an exhibition than exhibitionism.

As an exhibitionist, whose philosophy is that all is one, Borofsky's steady impulse is to let it all hang up. (His first obtrusion into the general consciousness of the art world was an installation at the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York City in 1975, for which he literally emptied his studio.) "All is One" implies at least two attitudes. First, individual works are actual pieces, parts of a whole, pieces of Borofsky, thus dependent on the whole for what interest they may have. And second, one piece is as important as any other—"It's all one"—you happen to show. There is a spirit of egalitarian tolerance in Borofsky's periodic studio-sweeping to fill this gallery or that, any doodle counting for as much as one of his enormous "Hammering Men." There is naturally a question about how any of this gets sold, but it has long been clear that the true geniuses of the contemporary art world are the dealers, capable of extracting cold cash for what most of us would suppose was to be thrown away. In whatever way this miracle of merchandising is transacted, Borofsky has clearly prospered, with larger and larger studios to empty into larger and larger spaces. He has reached the point where there is enough material to instill a dense disorder on the whole fourth floor of the Whitney.

One of the rooms is like a bulletin board, with pieces of paper—pages, sheets, scraps—pinned to the wall. If not clippings from newspapers, they are memorandums, jottings, doodles, sketches, calculations, plans, lists, all done on the most utilitarian paper—spiral notebook pages, cheap stationery, from-the-desk-of pads and the like. Some of them are actually interesting: a letter, for example, that the artist dreamed had been sent him by Salvador Dali. It reads: "Dear Jon, There is very little difference between the commonplace and the avant-garde. Yours truly, Salvador Dali." This was "done" in 1978, and I wish I had seen it then, since it corresponded to some thoughts about art I was working on at the time, which were published a few years later as *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. But it is not really part of Borofsky's intention to produce things more interesting than others. Referring to his first in-

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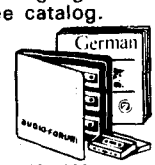

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stallation at the Cooper Gallery in 1975 he writes, "It represented my attitude that everything is good—there was no real selection process, or if there was, it was minimal." That show, the first in a series culminating in this one, "seemed to give people a feeling of being inside my mind."

In many ways it is, almost, a child's mind, if children are really as innocent as we used to like to believe. There are no erotic thoughts, or very few: even when his self-portraits are naked, there are no genitals, though in one drawing he carries a flute. There are a lot of dreams, mostly of the sort our children tell us in order to be comforted. "I'm walking the streets of some strange town with my mother. I hustle with my mother and a huge crowd into a supermarket for protection" is the subtitle of "Dream #1." He dreams he climbs a white mountain covered with electrical cables; that a man in a tower is being shot at; that he found a red ruby; that his father's tooth was bleeding; that a dog was walking a tightrope; that he could fly. Each dream is illustrated with an appropriate image or object. He thinks about the two sides of his personality—his male and female selves. When he thinks about politics, it is as a child would: "I dreamed that some Hitler-type person was not allowing everyone to roller skate in public places."

Mostly he likes to play. The initial impression of having wandered into an exuberant toyland is overwhelming. Everything seems to be moving. Five immense "Hammering Men," black and thin as shadows, raise and lower their mechanical arms in an endless silent Anvil Chorus. Against the ceiling, the light in a blue neon helix zips back and forth. Near the window "The Friendly Giant," sheathed in bubble wrapping, does pushups. Leaflets are strewn beneath him. The place looks as though a troop of naughty children had been given carte blanche, emptying baskets, tilting paintings, scribbling on walls, cutting pictures in half, playing with the TV and behaving, generally, like rowdy poltergeists. Random noises from four loudspeakers form an acoustical cascade. The dominating figure is a sort of dancing doll, with a large sentimental clown's head and a female body, its legs drawn into webbed pantyhose, wearing one pink ballet shoe and one blue one, to mark (perhaps) the male and female sides. The figure emits, while turning his/her toe, the familiar strains of—naturally—"I Did It My Way." It is as though Calder's circus, grown too large for the lobby, had taken over one of the main floors.

I saw the show just before it was finally in place, and the atmosphere was enriched with dollies, ladders, push-carts, wires and tools which might have been part of the show but which one knew were not, since everything belonging to the show is easily identified by the number it carries as its signature. Borofsky tells us that for two years he did little artistically but count, and indeed in a kind of reliquary one can see a stack of sheets, thirty-two inches high, the result of that monotonous labor. The counting continues, perhaps now carried on by the "Hammering Men," perhaps by the exercising "Giant." The numbers painted on individual works mark the point in the counting process at which the work was done. The "Dancing Clown" was at 2,845,325. Borofsky is already up to 2,970,882, the number borne by the poster for the show, of "Man with a Briefcase," evidently a kind of self-portrait. This figure seems more representative of Borofsky's artistic energies than the slightly nightmarish photograph of him pointing to numbers

GREENWICH 1930s

Angie stayed by the victrola
playing "You're the cream in my coffee"
over and over and over.
Burke peered in through the window-panes
from a hawthorn bush outside.

At 7:15 Bill's white-haired mother
turned on the radio—Stan Lomax.
The Cards had topped the Giants again,
one zero, Dean over Hubbell.

Janet was up in the pink room, hovering
pensively between bed and door.
Time to screw before dinner? Hardly,
and anyhow, Van had found her solemn—
"too solemn by half," he'd said at breakfast,
beastly cad with his mouth full of egg!

She'd show him. He wasn't *her* necessity—
but now, God damn it, she'd get her dress on
before that Burke came around from the back
to check the ball scores. What a horror!

Meanwhile, on the living room sofa,
Bill said polite things to his hostess—
reached up a hand to smooth her hair,
then stroked one breast ("you're the salt in my stew")

till Jan came clattering down the stairs.
"I'm here," she called. "Let's eat them pheasants!"
"Peasants, you mean," Bill's mother whispered—

but Angie liked Carl Hubbell's savvy,
the way that southpaw saved his screwball
to fan tough hitters in the clutch:
had little use for Dizzy Dean,
big loudmouth always in the papers . . .

Van and his host sidled in from the terrace
as Bess began announcing dinner,
and soon Burke loomed at the folding doors
to say goodnight. "I'll eat with cook."
"Good night, old Burke, sweet dreams!" they chorused.
Sleep with her too, thought Angie as
she took off the record. "I'd be lost without you."

Frederick Morgan

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imposed upon his forehead, face, arms and chest, and looking as though he had survived the inscriptional punishments of the Penal Colony.

Joseph Mashek has spoken of Calder's "no fault circus," as though Calder could do no wrong in the eyes of the Whitney's patrons. Neither, in his own view of himself, and perhaps in that of others, can Borofsky do wrong: All is one. This is not a posture a critic can assume, but it at least means that if we take him at his word, there is only one work to judge, namely everything he has done, taken as a whole. My sense is that if it is the inside of his mind, it's not a very interesting mind, and if it is not—well, the justification for showing everything dissolves. You have only "your[self]" to please, and I think you would enjoy the show. It is a marvelous installation, but very minor art. *There's* a bit of the *Zeitgeist* if anyone is still looking for it! □

MUSIC.

FRANK ROSE

U2

Bold, passionate, committed: over the past five years, the Irish rock band U2 has shown itself to be everything the majority of American youth is not. Like their English counterparts the Clash and the Gang of Four—but more effectively than either—they have married punk fashion with leftist politics to produce music that confronts the issues. In songs like "Sunday Bloody Sunday" and "Seconds," they distill the essence of sectarian violence and nuclear terror into four minutes of swirling guitar and staccato drumbeat. At a time when most groups just want to have fun, this one has found an audience for anthems that stir the soul.

And not a small audience, either. In December their latest album, *The Unforgettable Fire* (Island), appeared as number three on *Rolling Stone*'s pop chart; meanwhile, in city after city, tickets for their concerts were selling out in record time. At Radio City Music Hall they had people standing on their seats, shaking their fists and mouthing every word. The band members played like tightly tethered attack dogs. The band was dressed mostly in black leather, and the lead singer—a 24-year-old named Bono with the jut-jawed looks of a fiery young union leader—swept grandly across the stage like a Celtic Mao. At one point he even wrapped himself in a flag. The lighting was stark and powerful, red-and-black backdrops with pulsing white flashes that suggested an anarchist *Close Encounters*. The whole performance was less a concert than a rally, and as a rally it was powerful indeed—for my money, the most dramatic spectacle the left has produced since Jesse Jackson's speech to the Democratic National Convention.

A good deal of U2's strength derives from their musical stance. They're the quintessential big-guitar band, playing an aggressive but densely textured rock-and-roll that's full of angry majesty. With a crisp drumbeat and a ringing guitar, they create a vast, rolling sound that makes the chest swell. But their wall of sound is actually constructed of a dozen subtly interwoven influences, from the Rolling Stones to Irish folk music to Gregorian chants. This is a band that's rooted in its native culture—a culture, not coincidentally, that has more than a nodding acquaintance with hatred, bloodshed and death. And that, of course, is the other source of the band's power. Although the four members of the group are only in their early 20s, their heritage, and their willingness to deal with it, gives them an authority few other rock bands can claim.

The only problem with all this is that they make the audience feel like a crowd instead of a collection of individuals. Watching U2 you become part of the masses, mouthing slogans and shaking your fist. Even when they're singing about individuals, as opposed to ideas, their aggressive sound and Bono's stentorian delivery preclude any feelings that might be labeled tender or personal. Their new album, which was recorded in the ballroom of an Irish castle because they wanted a spontaneity you can't get in a recording studio, was clearly an attempt to get around the problem. To produce it they turned to Brian Eno, the art-rock experimentalist who's shown a flair for African polyrhythms and electronic sound processing, and his collaborator Daniel Lanois. The results are not as convincing as they might be—the record includes some indulgent moments, most notably a pretentiously titled vocal improvisation that

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should have been thrown in the moat—but they're promising nonetheless.

Eno's job was to raise the band to a new level of subtlety. Their previous producer, Steve Lillywhite, is a master of straight-ahead rock-and-roll; Eno tends to be meditative (though not necessarily quiet), almost Zenlike. Generally, he's confined his production efforts to groups like the Talking Heads, art bands with a discernible predisposition toward his style. Despite the range of its musical influences, U2 has never been a particularly arty outfit. How it would fare in Eno's hands was a matter of some speculation.

What Eno has done is to give musical form to the mysticism that has always been part of the group's approach. Although the band members don't publicize it, their songs are permeated with Christian belief. Their angry, wailing sound, their visions of apocalypse, their focus on death and regeneration, all bespeak a Christian mysticism that is at once primitive and up-to-the-moment. On *The Unforgettable Fire* (the name comes from an exhibition of art by survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings) their customary anthems have given way to songs that display a haunting ethereality. The subject matter isn't all that different—there are two songs about Martin Luther King Jr., for example, inspired by the thought of what such a person might have done for Ireland—but the dreamy atmospherics of the music warm things up considerably. And while their imagery is sometimes strained and their balance a little off, at their best moments they succeed in moving well beyond propaganda to a deft commentary on the human condition.

In concert, however, they remain as they were, Christian soldiers in the fight for peace. This sounds contradictory, and it is, but it's also what makes them so powerful. In the middle of "Sunday Bloody Sunday," as the drums tapped out a martial beat and the crowd stood defiantly on their seats, Bono led them in a chant of "No War!" So bellicose was their tone that they could have been brandishing bayonets. It was brilliant: selling peace by giving it the trappings of war, as if, properly packaged, peace might make your blood race too. It showed a feeling for the seductiveness of violence, a realization that things are so much more complicated and difficult than they seem. It also showed a brutal realism that's probably the key to their success in these times. □

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F	L	Y	I	N	G	S	A	U	C	E	R	S	■	■
F	■	O	■	U	■	S	■	R	■	P	■	T	■	C
A	N	D	A	N	T	E	■	R	A	I	N	I	E	R
N	■	E	■	C	■	T	■	E	■	G	■	P	■	A
D	A	L	L	I	E	S	■	N	U	R	S	E	R	Y
O	■	E	■	O	■	■	■	C	■	A	■	N	■	O
N	U	D	I	S	T	■	M	Y	R	M	I	D	O	N

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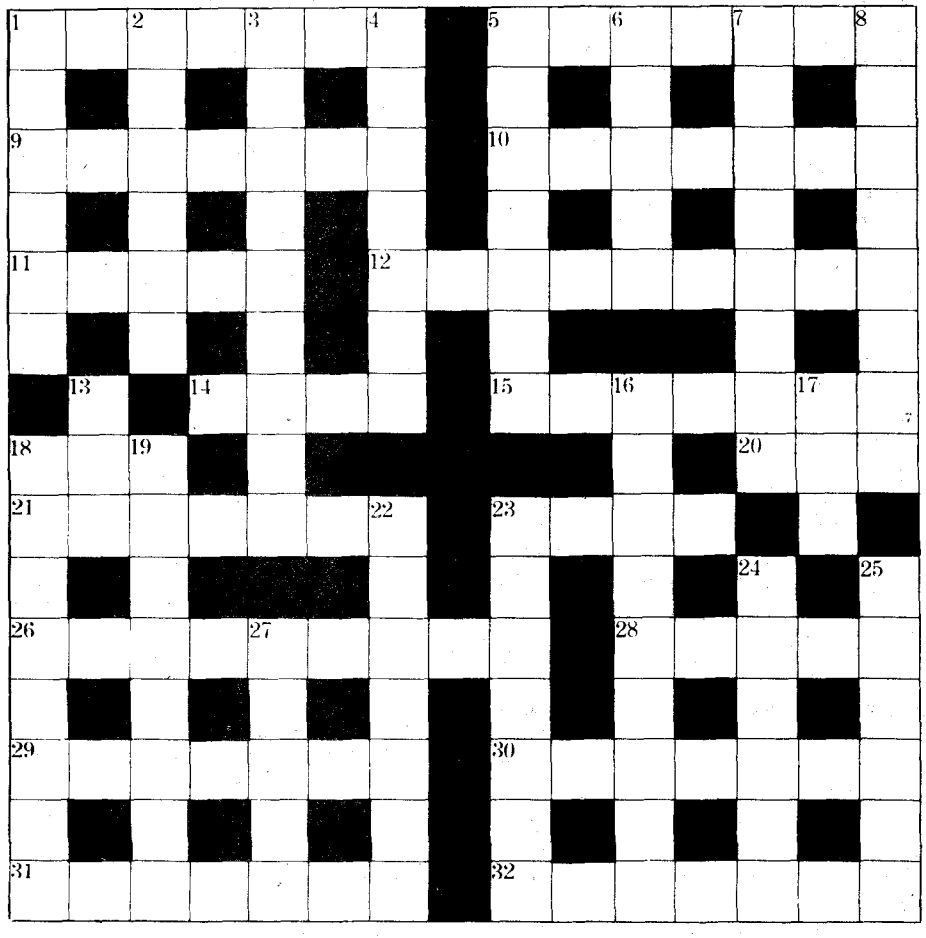

ACROSS

1, 24, 3, 19, 16 and 17 Instructions to the ballet in L'Allegro? (4,3,4,2,2,3,2,2,3,5,9,3)
5 Changing diapers is obviously cause for that hopeless feeling! (7)
9 A sorry mess, all shook up about nothing! (In the west they never run dry!) (7)
10 Little streets—move along like a wheel in them. (Walker does it, but not in a hurry.) (7)
11 In a way, oil up part of the French military machine. (5)
12 Is Mary all excited in the garden? (9)
14 In clover, obviously, but it's nothing to a tennis player! (4)
15 Given a meal in return, it's not too early to see what you might want to do to the pompous. (7)
18 Likely to be small living quarters. (3)
20 Spoilers are said to spare it for a little distance. (3)
21 Where there might be hellfire and damnation, for example, coming back to die, by the sound of it. (7)
23 Once it gets broken, you might find what's inside is cold. (4)
26 Sort of inelegant companion to 12, possibly. (9)
28 Lifeline, in a sense, of Australia or Tasmania. (5)
29 Genuine, but perhaps unrecognizable, part. (7)
30 A preset condition which is bad for what the unsatisfied recorder does, perhaps. (7)
31 Makes ready and goes down, possibly. (4,3)
32 A good performance might make it clear. (7)

DOWN

1 If in a hurry, reputedly one does at a bit of the winning type, as they say. (6)
2 In brief, it's one state a sort of bird shows to be unwholesomely gloomy. (6)
3 See 1 across
4 A breakout of seaside sickness. (7)
5 The sneaky old coward is just like father—about to take a leading role! (7)
6 What one might do with a rose or any bunch of flowers. (5)
7 What one hopes to hear after the raid is completely obvious. (3,5)
8 Put up a battle over the design of the dress tie? (8)
13 Split pea version to copy? (3)
16 and 17 See 1 across
18 Possibly a G.I. green (rather than O.D.) combination, but you'll say Yes if you are. (8)
19 See 1 across
22 This slightly different ailment is good for almost any body. (7)
23 One who takes care of the table after dinner, being somewhat less obscure. (7)
24 See 1 across
25 One might consider a displaced Slav as a very subordinate type. (6)
27 Nine days before Caesar fell, one goes in opposite directions! (5)

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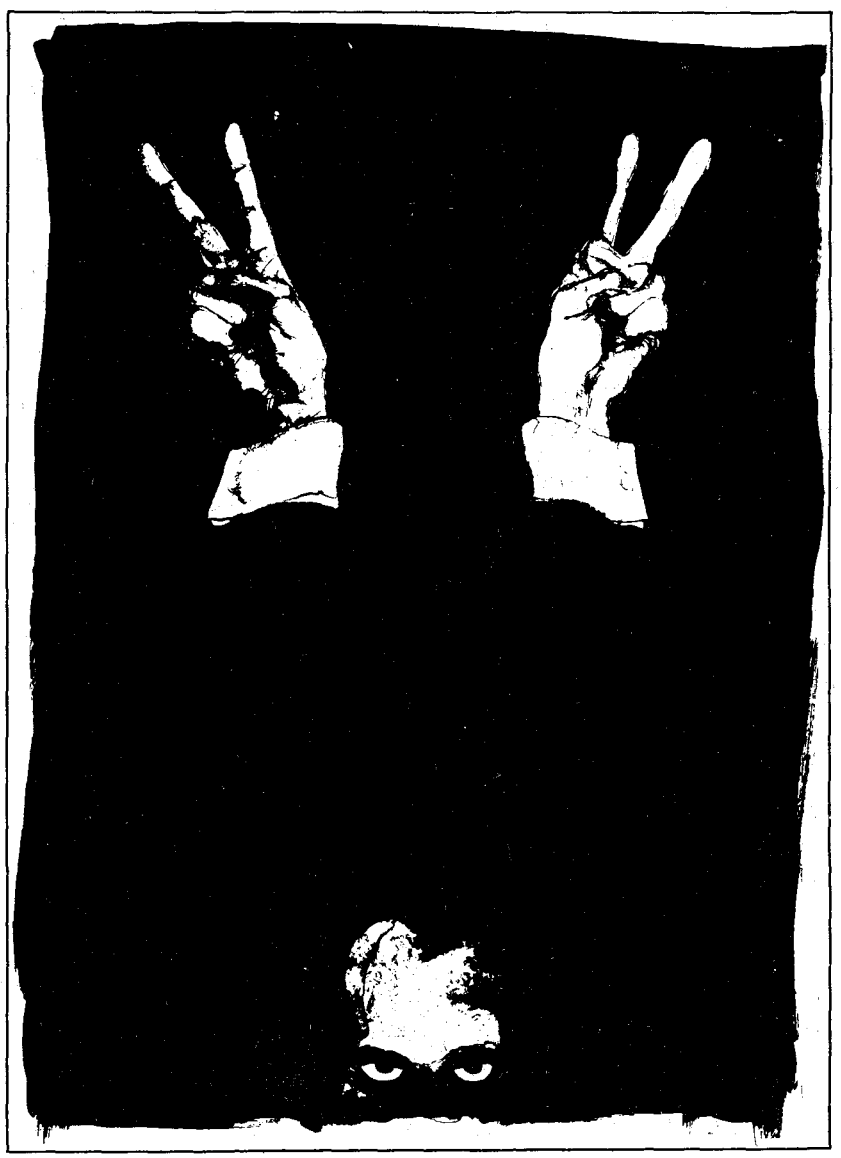

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